THE DISCOVERY OF GOD

Basil King

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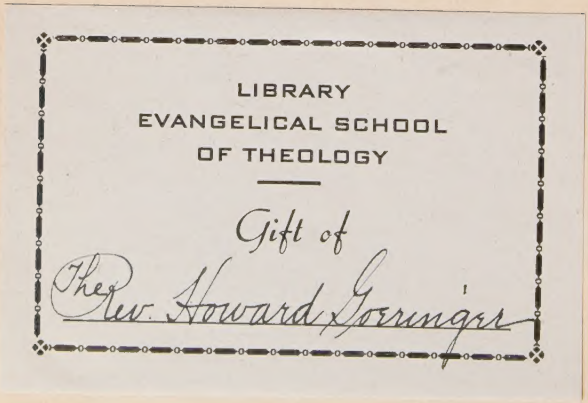
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THE DISCOVERY OF GOD

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THE DISCOVERY OF GOD IS A CONTINUOUS ASCENT, AND OFTEN . . . A HARD ONE.

The DISCOVERY OF GOD

BY

BASIL KING

AUTHOR OF "THE ABOLISHING OF DEATH,"
"THE INNER SHRINE," ETC.

WITH A FRONTISPIECE BY
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The Discovery *of* God

THE ELEMENTAL GOD

THE first of the many kinds of value we put upon the Bible attaches perhaps to the record which it keeps of man's discovery of God. It follows this story faithfully. One may say that its high lights come wherever an advance is made in this perception. To mark the stages at which another veil has been withdrawn from the Being of God might, in a general way, be given as the reason why, out of the mass of ancient Semitic literature, the books of the Old and New Testaments alone were selected for sacred preservation. These books are so varied in time, character, and purport that their choice may often seem due to haphazard or caprice, but to those who look carefully one unifying strand can be seen as binding them together in a comprehensive whole.

It will be my purpose to call the attention of lovers of the Bible to the main points in man's

struggle to see God. Every now and then, often after ages of what seems like spiritual inactivity, he reaches a loftier summit, where the outlook becomes clearer. He obtains then a fuller view into the Infinite and Eternal. The view is still limited, and indistinct, of course, but being more extended than any he has had before, he is encouraged to press on.

Generally speaking, this progress is made through some individual pioneer of truth who gathers into himself the best in what previous generations have handed down to him, and goes on to richer understandings. These adventures occur all through the Bible's reflection of the soul of man, and we shall pause at but a few of them. It shall be at such times as when to some sensitive spirit new qualities in God became evident, as radium to Madame Curie, or to Newton the law of gravitation. The experiences of men like Abraham, Moses, Isaiah, St. Paul, are so akin to discovery that there is no forcing of language in the use of the term. Developing their own insight into the Divine, they opened up the way by which others could follow their example.

It is not, of course, pretended that this book can be exhaustive, or answer all the ques-

tions that may be raised. The utmost that can be done is to follow a single thread as it runs from the first page of the Scriptures to the last. Even so this present volume can do no more than trace this thread, leaving the reader to work out details for himself. Suggestion rather than explanation will be the intention. In the effort to steer between the many conflicting opinions which center round the Bible, the purpose will be to keep close to the fundamentals as to which all Christians are agreed. It is probable that even in doing this some objection will be met with, but objection, it is hoped, in which there will be no offense. To see the Bible as the mirror of man's spiritual progress will become our only aim.

I

For man did not consciously set out to discover God. He set out to live his life, to do his work, to conquer his enemies, to beget his children, to commit his sins. While obeying these impulses he has, so to speak, discovered God by the way. In the industrial idiom of our time God might be called a by-product of man's endeavors, only, as so often happens commercially, a by-product of more value than the object of direct pursuit.

This does not mean that the same questions as

to the aim and end of things have not always been as much in the minds of men as they are today. We shall see presently that these inquiries start with the very beginning of man's awareness of himself as the Reason and Voice of Creation, but obvious tasks and material needs have remained in the forefront of his mind. Searchings as to the Why and Whence have urged themselves and been set aside; they have been set aside and have urged themselves again. Always active, in the subconsciousness at least, they have ended by attaining their objective.

II

But no more than man sets out to discover God does the Bible set out to tell us of this achievement. It betrays it while telling us about other things. It betrays it, in fact, while telling us about man. Man is the Bible's theme. Man's origin, man's growth, man's strength, man's weakness, man's endowment with a spirit that cannot cease from striving till the ramparts of heaven have been scaled—these topics form the subject of the books we conventionally know as the Holy Scriptures, as they form the subject of literature everywhere.

What the Bible tells us about God is incidental. It might be compared to what Walter

Scott, in a story of passion and adventure, tells us about Scotland, or Victor Hugo about France. God is the Hebrew writer's background. During much of the time He is taken for granted. He intervenes, or appeal is made to Him, when man's doings call for it, but not often otherwise. He is never described; He is never accounted for; no definition is ever made of Him. However primitive the conception of Him—and in the beginning the conception is very primitive indeed—He is treated as beyond the power of the pen. He is treated as beyond the power of the mind, except to the degree that the mind can become more and more clearly aware of His attributes.

This method of dealing with the prime factor of the universe is, in my judgment, a triumph of the indirect and allusive. There is almost never—never as far as I can recollect—a forcing of the note to an undue knowledge of the Supreme Mystery. Appeal is made to His justice, His mercy, His goodness, His almighty power, to each and any of the qualities which we learn by a process of induction to be His, but as to *Him* there is always reverent reserve. Man's doings are shown to us in the light of God's light, but that is all. In his discovery of God

man goes up from lower stage to higher stage, and from higher stage to higher stages still, but God remains forever unchangeable, forever dynamic, forever the source of all energy, being, and activity, eternally waiting till man develops the spiritual mind, the spiritual eyes, with which to behold Him as pure Spirit, which He is. The Bible records this development as the test and proof of man's progress.

III

It will be evident, then, that this is not evolution. Evolution implies modification, adaptation, and a process by which that which was suited to one element changes in such a way as to become suited to another. The thing which could swim in the water becomes able to creep on the land; the thing which could creep on the land becomes able to fly in the air. New powers are put forth; new physical forms are developed. The creature we see today is, as a rule, as far from its ancestor of the Old Stone Age as the words in our language are remote from their Aryan roots.

In the discovery of God there is nothing that resembles this. There is change on the part of man, but not so much in modification as in growth. He becomes less a child, as the scroll

of the Scriptures unrolls, and more of an adult; and though it will probably be many ages yet before he attains to what St. Paul calls "mature manhood and the stature of full-grown men in Christ," we see him in the Bible much as he is in the twentieth century. He has the same mental and physical equipment, the same passions, ambitions, and tendencies. In other words the Bible does not take us back to the days of the Piltdown or Neanderthal man, but only to man as he emerges into history. He emerges into history trailing clouds of myth, legend, tradition, from the ages of which there never could have been a written record, but he comes, as modern investigation shows us, in height, in form, in intelligence, potentially as he is now. The evolution which made him as he stands took place eons before his arrival on the scene of Genesis. After all, written history covers no more than perhaps five thousand years; and in the processes by which we come to be what we are, five thousand years are but as a tale that is told, and a watch in the night.

Nor does the fact that man has discovered God conflict with the tradition which many people love, of God's revelation of Himself. As a matter of fact, revelation and discovery are parts

of the same ideal. There could be nothing for man to discover if God were not revealing it, while all discoveries are essentially discoveries in the obvious.

By this I mean that the great storehouse from which in the course of his upward climb man has brought forth first this element of force, and then that, has always been wide open. Nothing has been kept a secret; nothing has been concealed. We do not live in a world in which the precious things are held back from us, to be doled out a little at a time. On the contrary; the riches of earth and sea and air have at all times been exposed and ready to our use. The defect has been in our ability to use them. We have had neither the eyes with which to see them nor the hands with which to handle them, but the forces themselves have been as obvious at any time during these ten thousand years as they are today.

Steam, for example, was as potent in all the ages before James Watt as on the night when he watched its action on the kettle, only there was no one to notice a fact which had been under the eyes of men ever since fire had first heated water. Oil had doubtless been gushing from millions of wells, only there was no one who saw

what purpose it could serve. Electricity was known to the Greeks, and at any time could have transformed man's life as it has done within the past few years. From the beginning of man's habitation of the globe the air has been the home of invisible animal life beyond the sands on the seashore for multitude; it has been the receptacle for sound waves which present us today with the latest marvel of our time; but any generation could have discovered what Pasteur and Edison and Marconi have revealed to us, since all things work together to make up an amazing *Obvious* for those who have the mind to perceive it.

And so it has been with God. Of all obvious phenomena He has been the most obvious. If there is a God, this is what ought to be natural, and this is what we find. All religions, all Christian religions especially, teach this now, but from the beginning of time the fact was not so evident. Long after our spiritual ancestors had come to accept God as the one Universal Almighty, they saw Him as a God who hid Himself away, leaving His children feeling after Him in the dark, and if they lost Him, damning them with punishments unspeakable. That concept is past, but because it is past it becomes the

more worth our while to note the stages by which we grew out of it. One after another the veils have been thrust aside, till that which hid the Holy of Holies was rent from the top to the bottom, and nothing hung between us and revealed Divine Expression.

IV

The degree to which God, as the Universal Father, is obvious to all who care to behold Him will be dealt with in proportion as we come nearer to man's discovery of the fact. At present we must consider the elemental God which the Book of Genesis puts before us as man's earliest spiritual concept of the Divine. It is not man's earliest concept, but his earliest spiritual concept. Artless and primitive, it has already begun to be sublime.

* "Jehovah God made heaven and earth. And no plant of the field was yet in the earth, and no herb of the field had yet sprung up . . . And Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the earth, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. And Jehovah God planted a garden eastward, in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had

* The passages throughout this volume, taken from the Bible, are quoted indifferently from the Authorized, Revised and various modern translations.

formed. And out of the ground made Jehovah God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil . . . And Jehovah God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it . . . And the man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the heavens, and to every beast of the field; but for man there was not found a help meet for him."

The necessity for finding a helpmeet for man comes to Jehovah God as something of an afterthought. Afterthoughts are freely ascribed to Him, not only by the age which saw the writing of the Book of Genesis, but by many ages later. "The Lord repented" becomes a recognized form of expression. A God who could change His mind or get new angles on a given situation is the kind of God—one is inclined to say the degree of God—to which the Bible first introduces us. The solitude of the Earth-born—for so the name Adam may be freely translated—impressed Jehovah God just as the results of our experiments impress ourselves. One thing being done, another is seen to be needed.

"And Jehovah God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept. And He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof. And the rib which Jehovah God had taken from the man, made He a woman."

The point, it will be noticed, is not what Jehovah God actually did, but what early man conceived of Him as doing. To the child-mind of the race it was difficult to see the Creator working on any other lines than those which might suggest themselves to men. God was man enhanced, glorified, deified. With powers and knowledge greater than man's He differed from man in degree rather than in kind. When He comes to call the Earth-born and his companion to account, He acts as a man would act, speaking in a voice that can be recognized as His, while walking out to refresh Himself.

"And they heard the voice of Jehovah God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. And the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of Jehovah God amid the trees of the garden."

It will be noted that they could so hide themselves, and that the presence of Jehovah God extended no further than the spot in which He happened to be walking. The thought so vivid

to the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, that "everything lies bare and exposed to the eyes of Him to whom we are responsible," is still far from the human consciousness, and will so remain for centuries to come.

The God who is at the Bible's starting-point is God in the image of man, naïve and rudimentary. His dealings with the Earth-born and his wife are as simple and direct as their dealings with each other. He is the third character of the drama, the highest of the three, but still a character with limitations. Unable to find Adam, He calls, "Where art thou?" Adam replies as he would reply to another human being, "I heard thy voice in the garden and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." Question and answer, question and answer, the incident is told, the guilt confessed, and the sentences pronounced. It is all on the primitive plane, young, ingenuous, childlike with the childhood of the world.

V

But where did the writer of the Book of Genesis find this material? He tells of an epoch of which there could have been no contemporary chronicle. Who then gave him the information he relates with so much authority?

It is not our purpose to deal with history, and yet the subject must now and then be touched upon. To get the value of the primitive concept of God we must keep steadily before us the conditions in which that concept grew in the human intelligence. We must go back to a period when little that we now know as civilized life had come into existence and the world was relatively empty. Man as we see him today had come into his domain, but it was from our point of view a new domain. Man himself was new in his appraisement of his powers and resources.

And yet, new as he was, he already had a past. It is impossible to go back to a time when the great speculations which force themselves on us had not already been pondered on. Before there was history, before there was writing, men were busy with the thought of God and of God's relation to themselves. They were weaving theories and making poems and telling tales around their camp-fires as nomadic peoples have ever done, and the story of their virgin world, and of the Beings who had made it, was the theme on which they dwelt with most curiosity. From a past which even to them, prehistoric as they were, was already distant and dark, traditions had come down in which all that was re-

membered, or guessed at, or known, was preserved in a formless epic of the ages.

Into this epic went legends, myths, ballads, family trees, laws, folklore tales, wise sayings, as well as biographical sketches and historical narratives more or less authentic. The critical spirit not having yet been born, no sharp line was drawn between that which had actually happened and that which was partly invented. In general, little was invented, but that which had happened was modified in the telling, and modified again, and yet again, with the liberty to edit assumed by verbal narration at all times.

More especially these modifications occurred as families developed into tribes, and tribes into nations. From the original Semitic source, which was perhaps in the mountains of Armenia, there had gradually sprung a number of interrelated peoples—Babylonians, Assyrians, Amorites, Canaanites, Moabites, Edomites, Hebrews —with a common ancestral heritage. The epic of the ages belonged to each, but to each in its own way. While the basis remained the same, the details differed with new backgrounds, new habits, and above all with the more definite trend in this or that direction of the national instincts. Of this primitive literature enough survives

apart from what the Hebrews have preserved for us to show that while the metal was identical the mintings were stamped by the various national cultures. In some cases the traditions became puerile, in some cases gross. The Babylonian version of the legend we know as that of the Garden of Eden seems to have been used as part of an obscene ritual. Outside of the Hebrew race the tendency was to degrade as much of the ancient heritage as could be thus applied to ignoble and lascivious purposes.

It was a point of view, a way of translating the primeval wisdom into such terms as contemporaries understood. The Hebrew did as the other did. The difference was in his translation.

VI

It adds to the significance of the Bible to remember that Hebrew literature did not begin with any of the books of our present Holy Scriptures. In its written and unwritten forms it was already an ancient literature before a line of one of them was penned. Of the earlier books classed as historical all, doubtless, would come more correctly under the heading of compilations rather than under that of original works. This is what we should expect. The writer of the Book of Genesis drew certainly from two

previous compilations, and possibly from more. These compilations had, in all human probability, been drawn from chronicles earlier still, while all went back to the primitive source of tradition.

Moreover, the scribes who made copies gave themselves a wide latitude of collaboration. Nominally copyists, they were really editors. Though their specific liberties with the text may at no time have been great, the sum total of them is of vast importance. Taken together they may be compared to the repeated filterings through which a water supply passes between the lake in the hills and the goblet in the town.

For in making these changes there was no dishonesty. A book was not yet recognized as the private property of the man who first produced it, subject to no emendation but his own. It was a community possession. Taken from the common heritage, it could be treated as they pleased by the common heirs, and the common heirs used this privilege freely.

On the whole they also used it wisely. It must be remembered that the transcribers of these books were not like the printers of a modern manuscript, bound to reproduce the original to the last jot and tittle. Their position was like

that of the engraver, who gives in the main the picture he sets out to copy, and yet puts it through his own interpretation. The interpretations of the ancient scribes must steadily have tended to throw a higher and purer import into legends which at first, with all their sweep of greatness, were childish, crude, or coarse. In the case of the Babylonians and Canaanites the water from the hills was polluted almost as soon as it left its source, turning into a stream of infection which in the end poisoned the peoples it supplied. In that of the Hebrews it was carefully drawn into one spiritual aqueduct, purified, and repurified, till, in the words of the Nazarene Master, it became "living water," quenching all thirst. Before the epic of the ages reaches our hands it has passed, therefore, through many processes of spiritualization. Refined, and refined again, the spiritual meaning is almost all that is now left of it.

It is an odd comment on the puerility of human intelligence that until within a generation or two the seeming *facts* narrated in the story of the garden of Eden meant more to men than its spiritual message. Fifty years ago storms of veritable passion raged round such questions as whether or not there had ever been a first man

whose name was Adam, Red-Earth, the Earth-born—a first woman whose name was Eve, the Mother—a Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil growing out of the actual ground—a Tree of Life that was doing the same—a Serpent with the gift of speech.

The relative unimportance of *facts* to the writers whom we now call sacred is difficult for the modern mind to grasp, but it must be clear in our minds that facts, as we know them, formed no part of what the compiler of the Book of Genesis was trying to convey to us. His *facts* were not those of time and place and incident; they were the steps of spiritual progress. The nearest modern parallel to his attitude which I can think of is that of Tolstoy, who in his more personal writings sometimes arranges the outer circumstances of his life to suit the stages of his inner growth. The inner growth was what he wished to explain to us, not the date and place at which such and such happenings occurred.

VII

What then are the meanings the Hebrew has read into the tradition which he makes the point of departure for his spiritual history of man? I have called the tradition naïve and artless, and outwardly so it is. Within we find a marvelous

transcription of what must have been man's state of mind on his first adventures into life as we now conceive of it.

1. Man and Woman—the Earth-born and the Mother—Adam and Eve—the members of the human race—have reached in their development the point of self-consciousness. They have become aware of themselves. They note the conditions surrounding them as good. They are so good as to constitute a Garden. The Garden is watered by rivers of which the Euphrates and the Tigris seem to have been two. Back in the immemorial centuries the Semitic race had pushed down from the harsh climate of the Armenian Taurus into the country we now know as Mesopotamia—Between the Two Rivers—of which the fertility was renowned. A tradition of ease would naturally color the Hebrew mind on harking back to the remote ancestral.

2. Man and Woman have come to the recognition of work as a daily duty. Their function in the Garden was "to dress it and to keep it." Labor was light; the ground produced easily; life had the innocence with which it comes to all young things before they reach the severity of the struggle between Right and Wrong.

3. But the struggle came. The human race

pushes on to a new stage of perception. Man and woman learn that within this life of which the bliss is ignorance there is a Knowledge of Good and a Knowledge of Evil. Furthermore, they perceive that to eat of the fruit of this Tree will be Death. It is a long step in mental development.

4. They understand too, that death in this sense means more than the death in which the dust merely returns to the dust. In the Garden of their existence there is another Tree with another kind of fruit. There is a Tree of Life. He who eats of that Tree will "live forever." Already, long before the dawn of history, long before there was anything but the uncouth words of primeval man to keep a record, the vision of immortality was in man's mind as part of the Eternal Purpose. But with it comes the suspicion that Life and the Knowledge of Evil cannot be compatible. In some mystic way, which probably they could not have explained, they know the Knowledge of Evil will bring Death.

5. For a time this reasoning is enough for them. But the human mind is adventurous, and along spiritual lines the woman's mind is more adventurous than the man's. She tries to think the matter out. The Knowledge of Good is ex-

cellent as far as it goes; but without the Knowledge of Evil it is only half the fact. It needs the other half to be complete. Only men know Good alone; gods know both Good and Evil. Far from bringing death, the Knowledge of Evil would make men as gods.

6. In the daring mind this argument works as insidiously as if a serpent were gliding in and out, suggesting thoughts. The Woman considers Evil—what it really consists in. She finds in it three elements. It is good for food—it pleases the lower appetites. It is pleasant to the eyes—it pleases the higher appetites. It is to be desired to make one wise. The last argument is the clinching one, as it always is. Evil will add to the experience. One will know what it is like. That in itself cannot but be an advance.

7. In the subtler things of life Man allows Woman to decide for him, as in the rougher and heavier things he decides for her. The tendency is evident, back in the dawn of the world. Woman having tasted of Evil, Man acquiescently follows her example.

8. They pass to another stage of experience. They learn that there is such a thing as shame. The consciousness of self which was at first but a consciousness of Good has become stained with

the dyes of lower and higher appetites, as well as with the sophistication of the worldly-wise. Inner anguish works itself outward in dread of the physical self. They are like frantic things, stripping the leaves from the trees to conceal themselves from each other. By and by Jehovah God will take pity on them and show them how to make coats of skin, and another step will be taken along the way we call civilized.

9. But in the meantime a new form of Knowledge is in store for them. They learn disillusion. The promise temptation had made, that they should become as gods, has not been kept. There is no possibility of its being kept. The thought that they had once argued that Evil could do them Good now mocks at them. When a real God comes down to walk in the Garden in the cool of the day, so far are they from meeting Him on equal terms that they run away from Him. Where there had once been a flaunting hope there is nothing now but impotence and misery.

10. But the next stage of experience is more comforting. They find a value in facing the fact that they have done wrong, and standing up to its results. Though much is lost, all is *not* lost. In the struggle with Evil man will

be the victor. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman," Jehovah God says to the Serpent, "and between thy seed and her seed. He shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." From a bruise in the heel a man may go lame; from a bruise in the head a serpent dies. It was no small thing for the dawn-ages of mankind to have worked out the principle that Good is more powerful than Evil, and that though man must suffer, he will triumph in the end.

11. But the days of innocence are over. Innocence is a quality which when once put off can never be put on again. So the human race finds itself outside the Garden of childhood, nor can it ever go back again. Angels with swords of fire guard that way, and duty lies in going on.

12. The closing of the gates of Eden was the symbol of a new epoch in experience. Mankind has passed the mere perception with which he appears upon the scene, the Knowledge that he has a choice of Evil as well as of Good. He has made his choice. As a consequence he knows that between him and Evil there must be perpetual enmity. He has entered on the age-long struggle in which he will be lamed, but a conqueror.

VIII

So the Bible gathers together in its opening pages all the conflict which must have torn mankind through the twilight centuries of which we know next to nothing. It is as much a masterpiece of condensation as a seed which contains in itself a potential tree. It closes one era of human growth and opens up another. It marks the beginning of the struggle in which each one of us is actually engaged, into which every child born to us emerges the minute when, at the age of two or three, it begins to distinguish Right from Wrong. Once that perception had come to the mind, Man and Woman were marked off forever from the Piltdown or Neanderthal generations which had preceded them. They had entered on the stage of personal responsibility. Henceforth they were to be both the masters and the victims of their acts. Consciously, unconsciously, subconsciously, they must wage the war in which they have now engaged, without a minute's relaxation, till at the end of their long climb upward they come out victorious.

And God is on their side. He is an elemental God as yet, and will remain elemental for many generations to come, but hints of a God who is

Love are already dimly manifest, as the mother who is love is dimly manifest to the baby in the cradle. Their aim, of which they are unaware, is the finding of this God. The Bible reflects the steps which lead to the discovery.

IX

Nothing can be more fatal to understanding the Bible than to suppose that it gives us one flat level of moral and spiritual knowledge. Far from being a flat level, it is a continuous ascent, and often a steep and a hard one. It is an ascent through failures and mistakes, as well as through successes and victories. The value of each stage can be tested only by the end to which it leads, and the end to which it leads is Jesus Christ.

It is the glory of the Books we are considering that, beginning with but a childish idea of the Divine, they conduct us up and on and out, during the two thousand years which it took to write them, to the Vision of the Nazarene Master. The expansion has no parallel in man's experience elsewhere. Never aware of itself as a movement, the search for God never flags. Never the intentional aim of either a people or a man, it shows itself as the objective which both men and peoples have been aiming at unconsciously. Eager to win national greatness

or individual prosperity, Man and Woman oftentimes miss the goal for which they have been making—but find that they discover God.

Reaching Him by unexpected avenues, they see in Him something they had not perceived before. The enlarging ideal is enlarged again at each new venture in life. It broadens with the generations; it grows deeper and higher with the centuries. Through thought and aspiration, through apostasy and defeat, through lusts and passions, through many crimes, through occasional triumphs, through struggle at all times, through the striving and suffering of the human spirit in every impulse, instinct, and emotion, we see men working from the elemental God made in the image of man up to the Universal Father whom no image can express.

ABRAHAM DISCOVERS THE ALMIGHTY GOD

TO understand any ancient literature, and the Old Testament more especially, it is important to guard against the error that myth, legend, and tradition are not true. Truth being as much in idea as in concrete fact, they are often the only forms in which it can be conveyed.

A myth, long transmitted, can distil into fable form primitive ideas as to religion, as to the origin of the world, as to the separation of the races, as to the rise of social institutions, because in no other shape could they so easily be condensed. A legend is no more than the enlargement into a tale, easily told and remembered, of events for the most part historical in essence. Tradition is the unwritten history of mankind. It passes from father to son, from country to country, working itself out in custom, speech, manners, law, and ways of thinking. Tradition is the element which welds the generations and

the peoples into something like a unity. More, perhaps, than any other one force, it holds the world together.

To say that the earlier portion of the Scriptures makes use of myth, legend, and tradition is in no way to invalidate its power of transmitting truth. Except in these forms the broken memories of the prehistoric and the barely historic could hardly have been summed up. It must not be forgotten that to man's discovery of God, and God's revelation of Himself, external facts are not of the first importance. If the spirit of them can be given, the necessary has been done. The one theme which the Bible develops consistently, even if unconsciously, is man's relationship to God, and to that external facts are only incidental.

Through the working together of all the means at the chronicler's command we have seen Man and Woman—otherwise the human race—starting on their upward climb at the moment when they have discerned the difference between right and wrong. The idea of God is as yet elemental, though fraught with potentialities. The seed being there, the tree will grow through the ages.

It grew slowly and irregularly. It flourished

here; it wilted there. Materialism was against it, as it always is. In the very first stages materialism, personified as Cain, rose up against the spiritual idea, personified as Abel, and slew it. The spiritual seemed already dead. At an early period the world belonged apparently to the seed of Cain.

"And Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bare Enoch. And he builded a city and called the name of the city after the name of his son, Enoch. And unto Enoch was born Irad; and Irad begat Mehujael; and Mehujael begat Methushael; and Methushael begat Lamech. And Lamech took unto him two wives; the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other was Zillah. And Adah bare Jabal; he was the father of such as dwell in tents and have cattle. And his brother was Jubal; he was the father of all such as handle the harp and the pipe. And Zillah, she also bare Tubal-cain, the forger of every cutting instrument of copper and iron."

Under these names, some of them uncouth to us, we must see more than individuals in a line of descent; we must understand generations, peoples, movements, tendencies, and the whole upward surging of the race. It was undoubtedly a period in which great things were

being done. Merely to have worked out of the Stone Age into the Iron Age was a long stride in progress. To have discovered the arts was a longer stride. The dividing of population between those who live in cities and those who dwell in tents and have cattle—the manufacturing and the pastoral classes—is along the specialized lines which civilization follows. Nothing accomplished in the twentieth century is worthier of the struggle upward than the efforts made by primitive men to raise themselves.

It will be noted that this is material development only. But the spiritual idea which seemed dead in Abel came to a new birth in Seth, and grew again.

It grew again, to face a new form of attack. Direct onslaught having failed to kill it, inner perversion was tried, and tried not unsuccessfully. The line of Seth corrupted itself. The God who could come to regret what He had done regretted it.

"And Jehovah saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented Jehovah that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And Jehovah said, I will destroy

man whom I have created from the face of the ground; both man, and beast, and creeping things, and birds of the heavens; for it repenteth me that I have made them. But Noah found favor in the eyes of Jehovah."

The Flood, which in the Babylonian legend came through the rising of rivers, and in the Hebrew through rain, was doubtless some catastrophe in which the ancient mind read the kind of lesson as to moral consequence which some of us have seen in the Great War. We must note, however, the primitive form of expression. Corruption seeming to call for punishment, that punishment was seen as the wrath of an angry God. A God subject to violent fits of passion is a concept easy to the elemental and ignorant, who are subject to the same. The Creator who repented that He had made man, and who was grieved at His heart over His mistake, would naturally break out into threatenings and slaughters.

I

Let it be remembered here that any seeming misconception is verbal rather than actual. If Evil wars against Good, Good must also war against Evil. It is the continuance of the struggle in which the serpent wounds man's heel,

and man crushes the serpent's head. God's forces are on man's side and on that of ultimate victory. If He is represented as "angry," it is only because the thought and phrase of three and four thousand years ago were less nicely adapted than those of today to the ideal of God as unchangeably of Love. It must never be forgotten that large portions of the Bible are of extreme antiquity. In them are embodied man's first gropings after that All-Tender Universal which we have not completely realized ourselves, but toward which we are on the way. The angry God, the jealous God, the remorseful God, of the Old Testament are but the terms of man's imperfect understanding, dropping into disuse in proportion as God is discovered as dynamic, unvarying Good-will.

The point to be noticed in these early pages of the Scriptures is the conflict between the material and the spiritual standards. Now the one, now the other, seems to triumph. While the idea of God remains elemental, it nevertheless tends to purify itself as time goes on. Then, as the mists enshrouding the early eons begin to lift, one great figure, in whom the spiritual impulses which strain forward are blended and exemplified, emerges dimly but colossally.

II

"Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran begat Lot. And Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees . . . And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot, the son of Haran, his son's son, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife, and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees to go into the land of Canaan. And they came unto Haran and dwelt there."

These were the days of great migrations. How far these names represent the movements of individuals only, or of whole tribes under the leadership of individuals, is now obscure. From a point a little north of the Persian Gulf they journeyed up the greater part of the length of the Euphrates into the rich plain between that river and the Tigris, then known as Padan-Aram, now as Mesopotamia, and there halted.

In that lush country, to which Hebrew legend always looked back as the Garden of Eden, the starting-point of the human race, the vision of man widened its outlook upon God, seeing Him as beyond any of man's speculations hitherto. What Abraham drew from his own meditations and what he learned from others cannot now, of course, be known. It is certain that he was

not alone in his spiritual striving. Scattered here and there were men and women as eager then as they are today to get out of the stagnancy of merely accepted assumptions and to find God for themselves. Discoveries of any kind, as we often have opportunities to observe, come through a time-tendency. Abraham was the spokesman of his era. Summing up its aspirations in himself, he carries them to a point to which no one of his contemporaries was seemingly prepared to go.

After the God of hopes and fears, of jealousies and distrusts, which the early pages of Genesis portray to us, it is like coming on a higher order of existence to read the call in which Abraham feels the urge to leave Padan-Aram and push on into the unknown. The tone becomes unexpectedly more mature, the language nobler. Though God still shows traces of the vindictiveness which man recognized in himself, the prospect of universal blessing bespeaks a new expansion in the human mind. It is probable that no such ideal could have been formed earlier. The illumination in this man's inner life was great enough, not only to impart the sense of a consecrated mission, but to make him to all the future the vehicle of Good-will.

"Now Jehovah said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee. And I will make of thee a great nation. And I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing! And I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse. *And in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.* So Abram went forth as Jehovah had spoken unto him . . . And they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came."

III

Why Canaan? Why not Padan-Aram, or Ur of the Chaldees?

The country has taken so large a place in human thought and speech that its significance is worth noticing. Making all allowance for those explanations after the fact which mark so much of early history, the destiny of the Hebrew people seems, from their first development out of a family into a tribe, and out of a tribe into a nation, to have been linked with this southeast corner of the Mediterranean littoral. And, as a matter of fact, there we find civilization's focal point for perhaps three thousand years. All the great empires which rose and fell turned round

and round about it. Situated between the two river powers of the very ancient world, that of the Nile and that of the Euphrates, it was open to the influence of both. With the sea as a highway to Greece and Rome, it was in touch with the more modern world the minute it came into existence.

It was therefore a natural center for the getting, as for the distribution, of ideas. It drew them from all quarters; it put them through its own spiritualizing processes; it sent them out again. It has sometimes been made a reproach to the Bible that much of what was supposed to be original with the Hebrews is found to have been absorbed from the Egyptians on one side, from the Babylonians on the other, or from the more remote east or west. But the fact is an enlargement of the Bible's function as the interpreter of mankind's guesses at the truth. It is well to remember that the Bible's roots struck out to all the known reservoirs of supply. Taking its ideas where they could be found, it purified and enriched them, but the sources were what, with due limitations, we may call universal.

Abraham himself was universal. He knew all the civilizations of his time. We find him

far in the east on the Persian Gulf; far in the north, in Mesopotamia; far in the south, in Canaan; far in the west, at the court of the King of Egypt. More than a nomad, more than a desert sheik, he was a traveler, a thinker, and a man of world experience. Standing in the twilight where the history which could only be told in myths, legends, and traditions begins to give place to the work of the chronicler, he is the first, as far as we know, to see human existence as a venture with a purpose.

The purpose is dim as yet; it is far off; it has no clear outline; but it is beneficent. In spite of all the ills of social corruption and international violence, of which instances are given us, the high goal at the end of man's struggle has come into sight. It will never again go out of sight. Individuals will lose it; whole nations will disregard it; there will be times when a vast majority will deny that it is there; but some will always keep it in view and lead the rest of the world on.

To the man who discovered it, great honor must be due. He was not a perfect man, as we estimate perfection. Notwithstanding his vision his standard of ethics was below that which later ages reached, and even his less enlightened col-

leagues, the Kings of Gerar and Egypt, had the right to reproach him with dealings they found unfair. The Bible tells this with no attempt to hide a hero's weaknesses. Revealed to us as he is, only in the half-light between the legendary and the semi-historical, he is a credible human man who, like most pioneers, was both beyond his time and within it. But he is a great man—the first, perhaps, of that long and stately procession of great men which the human race has produced.

IV

For his claims to greatness rest not alone on the discovery that in his relation to God there is a purpose to man's life. As age comes on, as experience grows richer, as thought is able to climb to higher and higher outlooks, he reaches the most overwhelming conviction that had ever, as yet, been seized by human intelligence.

"Jehovah appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am God Almighty."

It will be seen at once that in these words we are far from the merely elemental God of the more primitive ages. Whether this revelation came to Abraham, the man, or whether in Abraham, the man, it is only centered and expressed, is a point of minor importance. It came to some

one. It came to some one at some time in the course of man's expansion. The essential fact is that it came. Once having come, it began to transfigure man's life, as the world is transfigured by the dawn.

Not that the world laid hold at once of the conception of Almightiness. It was a material world, and for a material world the only almightiness is in matter. To the human race at large the Almightiness of God has been theoretic only. This is as true of Church as it is of State; as true of religion as it is of business. Abraham's vision has always been visionary except to a few, and those few have made it a reality for themselves alone. To active Divine Almightiness the material has always been opposed and hitherto opposed successfully. An Almighty God is not a working factor in the world of men. He is a vision, but a vision that has been seen.

The stage at which the Almightiness of God supplants the almightiness of matter is one to which the human race, except in the case of individuals, has not yet attained. While reasoning is often spiritual, practice is oftener material. The condition will doubtless obtain for many generations to come. But there is this to be said for the human race, that once it has perceived

an ideal, it never absolutely lets it go. It will play fast and loose with it, turn away from it, come back to it, turn away from it again, renounce it, abjure it; but sooner or later it will be converted to it finally and will make it its own. In the long run it will probably assimilate this discovery of Abraham's. An Almighty God will become more than an expression. In other words, a world which will have wearied of the experiment of governing itself through mutual suspicions, hatreds, rivalries, enmities, cutthroat diplomacies, and brutal wars, social, military, and religious, will have learned that Good-will toward men by men is the only irresistible force.

To Abraham the new understanding came as a great marvel. With a God who was Almighty anything was possible. He, Abraham, was no longer hedged in by circumstance. That which he had put out of the question could happen as easily as not. Almightiness being not in matter but in God, all merely physical laws must give way to it.

It was more than a conviction, more than an enthusiasm; it became a burning and consuming faith which he could test to any extremity. Nothing was too hard for it. He could trust it to the uttermost, up to the end of reason and

beyond. During the rest of his life we see this as his dominating thought leading to the outstanding act in his whole spiritual drama.

V

The unexpected had happened. A son by his wife had been borne to his old age. The father understood that it was through the person of this lad that the new nation was to descend and the "blessing" come to the whole world. So much was clear.

But it was also clear that by an Almighty God the hopes founded on the lad could be realized just as easily even if the person of the lad were removed. "Is anything too hard for Jehovah?" had been the question on their lips at the time of the child's birth. In the new discovery there was an exultation, almost a recklessness, of confidence. The suggestion rose in the father's mind that perhaps, after all, God willed to produce the nation and work out the "blessing" *through* the boy, but *without* the boy. If so, it would simply be another triumph of His Almightiness. The knowledge that, as the Nazarene Master put it two thousand years later, "God can raise up descendants for Abraham from these stones," was already in his mind.

"And it came to pass after these things that God did prove Abraham, and said unto him . . . Take now thy son, thine only son whom thou lovest, even Isaac, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of."

It must be repeated here that a primitive chronicler is telling this story in the tongue of a primitive age. For the moment it is enough to bear in mind the difference between ancient and modern ways of thought and forms of expression. What is to us the conviction of the inner man was to elemental peoples the external utterance of God. They saw direct and positive command where we see a wrestler with God putting himself to a last terrific test.

"And Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son. And he clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up and went unto the place of which God had told him. On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said unto the young men, Abide ye here with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder; and we will worship, and come

again to you. And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took in his hand the fire and the knife; and they went both of them together.

"And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said: 'My father!'

"And he said: 'Here am I, my son.'

"And he said: 'Behold the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?'

"And Abraham said: 'God will provide himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.'

"So they went both of them together, and they came to the place which God had told him of. And Abraham built the altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son."

The scene is one of great dramatic intensity. Nowhere else in ancient literature is there to be found a situation between a father and his boy more tender or more tragic. The lisped question, the veiled answer, get force from their very simplicity. Remembering that behind them there was not only the devotion of an old man to the son given him late in life, but the hope of the future of the world, we see how

poignant must have been the nature of this sacrifice. But we see more. Beyond sacrifice is conviction. The hope of the world's future will be realized in spite of everything. He may take the knife and slay his son, and yet God is Almighty. Almightiness will carry out the promises.

In other words, faith may have been carried to extremes, but faith was new and ardent. It had not the reserves and peradventures with which we surround it today. It was not prudent; it was not perhaps wholly sane, as we count sanity. But it was superb. It was in the grand manner. It could call on the Almighty to prove Himself Almighty by a challenge at once extravagant and sublime.

VI

To get the value of the episode two points must be borne in mind.

1. According to the standards of his time a Prince-Patriarch had the right to slay his son. A human being had as yet no claim to the assured possession of his life. He was not an independent entity. Nothing was guaranteed to him. He had no place as a citizen, and as a subject he was little above the level of a living piece of property. If, as civilizations developed

along the banks of the Euphrates and the Nile, laws were passed protecting individuals against each other, there were none to make them anything but chattels of the king.

Among the nomadic tribes the head of the family was the supreme lord. Imagine a social condition of not a little softening of manners, but in which there was no government, no legislation, no law, no compelling force beyond that of custom and the dictates of the Chieftain. The Chieftain's will was all there was to keep the tribe a unit. Tribal unity required not merely patriarchal rule, but patriarchal ownership. From this ownership nothing and no one was exempt.

There could not, therefore, come into the Patriarch's mind any of the qualms and questions which would have stirred in a man of a later period in history. There might be suffering in his heart, but his sense of justice would be undisturbed. Out of the fatherly love and pride in him the last drop of anguish might be wrung, but all that made him a Prince-Patriarch would be left serene. He was doing what he had an acknowledged right to do, and neither victim nor relative could have known a thought of protestation.

2. Doubtless, too, there lurked in his mind the belief, not wholly outgrown, of the higher value of the human sacrifice. I have said that, like other pioneers, he was both beyond his time and within it. If he had seized the concept of an Almighty God giving a purpose to man's existence, there were phases of knowledge to which he had not advanced. In the inference that a human sacrifice must be dearer to God than any other sacrifice, because of its costliness to man, he was, it would seem, still of his day and generation.

While in later ages a sacrifice came to bear a highly purified meaning, to elemental men it was a gift to the Deity to please and appease Him. This hope of placating God by giving Him the thing man held as most precious was not outlived for many generations. The thing man held most precious was his child, and in child-sacrifice the ancient mind found a fearful fascination.

Though the Hebrews were perhaps the first to reject in theory this conclusion as to the Divine, in practice they gave it up slowly. As the nation evolved a State, the severest laws were enacted against fathers and mothers who sacrificed their children, but secretly or openly the offerings continued. Of the Israelites in the

time of Moses an historical recital declares that "they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto demons, and shed innocent blood—even the blood of their sons and of their daughters whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan." Centuries later, when Judah was tottering, the reforming king, Josiah, was obliged to take measures against child-sacrifice, while in the reign of the last prince of the line of David they still, according to Jeremiah, "built the high places of Baal, which are in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire unto Moloch."

For such sacrifice to be possible there must have been a persistent and deeply rooted belief. Something had to be gained by it, or fathers and mothers would never have so outraged their affections. Fundamentally it was the conviction that the favor of God, so difficult to secure, could not but be granted to those who bought it at such a price.

VII

The Prince-Patriarch belonged to his time in the degree to which he considered the sacrifice of his son an act of merit; he was beyond his time in perceiving in the end that no such sacrifice was asked for.

"And the angel of Jehovah called unto him out of heaven, and said: 'Abraham! Abraham!'

"And he said: 'Here am I.'

"And he said: 'Lay not thy hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him. For now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me.' "

Again we must bear in mind the tendencies of primitive verbal expression. Where modern psychology would read the higher reasoning of the Patriarch's own mind, the early chronicler heard an angel calling from the sky. Between the two, perhaps verbal expression is the chief difference. What, after all, is an angel but a messenger? And if God is Universal Mind, why should not our higher thoughts be messages? If God is the Intelligent Working Energy of man, would not an Intelligent Working Energy which never speaks be mechanical and partial? This is not argument; it is suggestion only; but the identification of true perception with the Voice of God's Messenger is not without its beauty.

To Abraham message followed on message, as great perceptions broadened into greater ones. He had long ago come to understand God as

Almighty; before putting himself to the supreme test he had seen Him also as Everlasting. Now the angel of the Lord calls unto him out of heaven a second time. What he had already understood is made more positive and definite. He had gained much on his own personal account, but, after all, gain on his own personal account was but gain for the world at large. He was the first altruist we know anything about, the first to whom the good of his fellow-men was as dear as his own good. Good for himself could only be good in proportion as they, far into the future, should share in it.

"By myself have I sworn, saith Jehovah, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is upon the seashore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies. *And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice.*"

The final widening of this man's horizon was in a new understanding of spiritual cause and effect. Because *he* obeyed the Voice, not only he but others were to benefit. What we perceive clearly, he appreciated dimly: that no man can

do right to himself alone. That a single right act is a universal asset, in which, to its degree, all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, is the last of his great discoveries in God of which we shall take note.

VIII

We will close on a scene of high courtesy, marking the manners of a time backward to darkness in some respects, and in others strangely advanced. Sarah, whose part in the sacrifice of Isaac was probably that of dumb agony, had died in the land of Canaan.

"And Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her. And Abraham rose up from before his dead, and spake unto the Children of Heth, saying:

" 'I am a stranger and a sojourner with you. Give me a possession of a burying-place with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight.'

"And the Children of Heth answered Abraham, saying unto him:

" 'Hear us, my lord. Thou art a prince among us. In the choice of our sepulchres bury thy dead. None of us shall withhold from thee his sepulchre.' . . .

"And Abraham rose and bowed himself to the people of the land, . . . saying:

"'If it be your mind that I should bury my dead out of my sight hear me, and entreat for me to Ephron the son of Zohar that he may give me the cave of Machpelah which he hath, which is in the end of his field. For the full price let him give it to me, in the midst of you, for a possession of a burying-place.'

"Now Ephron was sitting in the midst of the Children of Heth. And Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the audience of the Children of Heth, even of all that went in and out of the gate of his city, saying:

"'Nay, my lord; hear me. The field give I thee; and the cave that is therein, I give it thee. In the presence of the children of my people give I it thee. Bury thy dead.'

"And Abraham bowed himself down before the people of the land. And he spake unto Ephron in the audience of the people of the land, saying:

"'But if thou wilt, I pray thee hear me. I will give thee the price of the field. Take it of me, and I will bury my dead there.'

"And Ephron answered Abraham, saying unto him:

"'My lord, hearken unto me. A piece of land which is worth four hundred shekels of silver,

what is that betwixt me and thee? Bury therefore thy dead.'

"And Abraham hearkened to Ephron. And Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver which he had named in the audience of the Children of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant . . .

"And after this Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah . . .

"And Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people. And Isaac and Ishmael his sons buried him in the field of Machpelah . . . the field which Abraham purchased of the Children of Heth."

So passed one who had moved vastly farther off the horizon of man's vision.

JACOB DISCOVERS THE GOD WHO CARES

ALL ancient Hebrew history is given in the form of dramatic narrative. Historical narrative pure and simple seems not to have developed till the return from exile, in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. The discussion of a theme in the modern manner was never practiced by the Biblical writers, who trusted to personal or national interest to carry any secondary subject they may, consciously or subconsciously, have had in mind.

For this reason most of the discoveries in God are connected with individuals, who are made to express the time-spirit of the generations which produced them. Men *thought* as actively in the early ages as they do in this, just as a human being thinks as actively at five as he does at fifty. In the one case the thinking is more direct and artless, and in the other more complicated and mature; but the subjects turned over in the mind are eternally the same.

In making the story of an individual the

vehicle for thought there cannot but be a tendency to clothe the episodes of his life in such a way that the thought becomes obvious. This tendency forms the legend. The legend is not generally an invention. Weaving itself round some actual incident, it endues it with spiritual meaning, as a gardener takes the accidents of a plot of ground and makes them the expression of his art.

It must again be repeated that this is not untruth. The truth is in the thought, not in events which time has rendered shadowy. The events of a lifetime so recent as of sixty or a hundred years ago are already swallowed in oblivion, but the truth which that life has worked out—the thrift, the foresight, the righteousness—remain as permanent possessions. The significance lies in the spiritual consequence, not in exact information as to the material steps which led to it.

It would be interesting to know precisely how man reached the conviction of a personal relation between himself and God, but all we do know is that this conclusion is expressed for us in what purports to be the life-story of one of the most complex and least sympathetic characters in the Bible. It was probably a matter of induction. Men argued that if this was so, then

that must be so. If God was really Almighty as discerned by Abraham, and if He meant to bless all the families and nations of the earth, then He must have a care for the individual. To bless families and nations and not bless individuals was impossible. If Noah could be saved from the Flood, if Lot could be saved from Sodom, if Abraham could find grace because he obeyed his higher promptings, then any individual might look for help in proportion to the same kind of obedience. It was not at first a positive conclusion. It was speculative, timid, hardly daring to assert itself. The value of Jacob's contribution to the world is that he put it to the test.

I

The second son of Isaac and Rebekah, he was the grandson, but not the heir, of Abraham. The heir was his elder brother, Esau. The difference between the prospects of the two will be seen if we remember the absolute authority which went with the position of Prince-Patriarch. Isaac having succeeded to Abraham, Esau would succeed to Isaac. Jacob would become the chattel of his brother in property, liberty, and life.

There is much in the Bible to imply that to the ambitious, resourceful, younger brother the

situation was a galling one. In this he was abetted by his mother, of whom he was the favorite son. Her support was the more powerful owing to the fact that the Prince-Patriarch Isaac was of a gentle disposition, a saint rather than a man of action. At the same time Esau seemed debarred from the tasks of leadership by his spiritual insufficiency.

A rough, sincere, big-hearted man of the chase, he took his hereditary position lightly. That position involved more than the duties of a tribal chief. Abraham's richest legacy lay in his discoveries in God. These discoveries constituted a transmitted trust, to be guarded, used, and handed on. It was not merely for themselves that the house of Abraham held it, but for the sake of all mankind. It must not be forgotten that universal blessing was the objective dear to them. Already Jehovah had appeared unto Isaac repeating the assurance given to his father:

"I will establish the oath which I sware unto Abraham, thy father. And I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these lands. *And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed,* because that Abraham obeyed my voice."

As the heir of Abraham, Isaac had a consecrated mission; as the heir of Isaac, Esau had the same. It was his undoing that from a very early age he undervalued it. From an equally early age Jacob knew it as the highest of human privileges, resolving by some means or any means to make it his own. Diligently watching, he found a day when he caught his more thoughtless brother off his guard.

"And the boys grew. And Esau was a skilful hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a quiet man, dwelling in tents. Now Isaac loved Esau . . . and Rebekah loved Jacob.

"And Jacob boiled pottage; and Esau came in from the field, and he was faint. And Esau said to Jacob:

" 'Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint.' . . .

"And Jacob said: 'Sell me first thy birthright.'

"And Esau said: 'Behold, I am about to die; and what profit shall the birthright do to me?'

"And Jacob said: 'Swear to me first.'

"And he sware unto him and sold his birthright unto Jacob. . . . So Esau despised his birthright."

This indifference to unique responsibilities

gives the key to Esau's character. The key to Jacob's is in the eagerness with which he seized on them. Crafty, unscrupulous, quick to perceive an advantage and make use of it, at least he understood that something had been given to the world which it was worth while to live and die for. While he asked other things of life, he asked the honor of so living and so dying first of all. We shall have occasion to observe how deeply this desire entered into his subconscious life, largely determining the man.

The birthright obtained by this businesslike transaction was assured to him forever by a bold stroke of deception. Part of the incentive seems to have lain in Esau's recent marriage to two wives, Judith and Bashemath, both of the daughters of Heth, who were "a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah." Religion, as experience shows, going so often in the line of the mother, it was probable that the children of Esau, especially in view of Esau's indifference, would forget the vision of Abraham and become worshipers of the Hittite gods. The Hittite civilization, next in refinement to the cultures of the Nile and the Euphrates, was all round them, with its multifold attraction to the young. To save the true faith, by any means, seemed to be legitimate.

II

The impulse of Jacob and Rebekah was apparently to help God when His work had grown too hard for Him. It is often the prompting of human good intentions. If God could not be helped by fair means, they must make the attempt by foul. It was a foregone conclusion that God must be helped, and all the more when helping Him accorded with the mother's love and the son's ambitions.

The Prince-Patriarch had grown old and blind. Possibly some suspicion of the designs of his wife and his younger son urged him to make final and official declaration of Esau's position as his heir.

"And it came to pass that when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim so that he could not see, he called Esau, his elder son, and said unto him, 'My son!'

"And he said unto him: 'Behold, here am I.'

"And he said: 'Behold, now I am old. I know not the day of my death. Now therefore, take, I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver and thy bow, and go out to the field, and take me some venison, and make me savory meat such as I love, and bring it to me that I may eat; that my soul may bless thee before I die.' "

The reference seems to be to some ancient ritual feast, of which the paschal meal is a greater example, traces surviving in our Eucharist.

"And Rebekah heard when Isaac spake to Esau his son. . . . And Rebekah spake unto Jacob her son, saying:

"'I heard thy father speak unto Esau thy brother . . . Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to that which I command thee. Go now to the flock, and fetch me from thence two good kids of the goats; and I will make them savory food for thy father, such as he loveth; and thou shalt bring it to thy father, that he may eat, so that he may bless thee before his death.'

"And Jacob said to Rebekah, his mother: 'Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man. My father, peradventure, will feel me, and I shall seem to him as a deceiver. And I shall bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing.'

"And his mother said unto him: 'Upon me be thy curse, my son. Only obey my voice, and go fetch me them."

The resolute mother, from whom doubtless Jacob had inherited his audacious subtlety, carried the situation with a high hand.

"And Rebekah took the goodly garments of

Esau her elder son, which were with her in the house, and put them on Jacob her younger son; and she put the skins of the kids of the goats upon his hands and upon the smooth of his neck. And she gave the savory food and the bread which she had prepared into the hand of her son Jacob. And he came unto his father, and said:

" 'My father.'

"And he said: 'Here am I. Who art thou, my son?'

"And Jacob said unto his father: 'I am Esau, thy first-born. I have done according as thou badest me. Arise, I pray thee. Sit and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me.'

"And Isaac said unto his son: 'How is it that thou hast found it so quickly, my son?'

"And he said: 'Because Jehovah, thy God, sent me good speed.'

"And Isaac said unto Jacob: 'Come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son, whether thou be my very son Esau, or not.'

"And Jacob went near unto Isaac his father; and he felt him, and said: 'The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau.'

"And he discerned him not because his hands were hairy as his brother Esau's hands; so he blessed him."

It is an indication of the low ethical standard which can go with high spiritual insight that not a word is said to condemn this deception. To the curse or the blessing were attached the powers given them by primitive and superstitious peoples everywhere, and in order to avoid the one and obtain the other any ruse seems to have been admissible. Having given the blessing of the heir to Jacob, it did not occur to Isaac that it was voided by a fraud. As helpless as one whose treasure has been stolen, he could only tremble when the true heir appeared, and give him the mere fragment of a blessing which remained.

"And it came to pass, as soon as Isaac had made an end of blessing Jacob, and Jacob was yet scarce gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting. And he also had made savory meat and brought it to his father, and said unto his father:

" 'Let my father arise and eat of his son's venison, that thy soul may bless me.'

"And Isaac his father said unto him: 'Who art thou?'

"And he said: 'I am thy son, thy first-born, Esau.'

"And Isaac trembled very exceedingly, and said *'Who?* Where is he that hath taken venison, and brought it me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him? Yea, and he shall be blessed!'

"And when Esau heard the words of his father he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father: 'Bless me, even me also, O my father!' . . .

"And Isaac answered and said unto Esau: 'Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants; and with corn and wine have I sustained him; and what shall I do now unto thee, my son?'

"And Esau said unto his father: 'Hast thou but one blessing, my father? Bless me, even me also, O my father!'

"And Esau lifted up his voice and wept.

"And Isaac his father answered and said unto him: 'Behold, thy dwelling shall be of the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above. And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother. And it shall come to pass, when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck.'

"And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him. And

Esau said in his heart: 'The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob.' "

But once more the ready-witted mother came to the help of her younger son, finding an excuse for sending him to the safety of the ancestral home in Padan-Aram, whence she herself had been brought to become Isaac's wife.

III

To the modern reader it is remarkable that by succeeding generations the personality of Jacob has been held in reverence and honor. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob became the national God, to be seen later as the Universal God. The whole Hebrew race was known in the future as the Children, not of Abraham or of Isaac, but of Israel, from the name taken by this third Prince-Patriarch after the blessing had been secured to him. Having obtained this blessing by a trick Jacob found himself apparently confirmed in it by the favor of Divine Omnipotence. It has long perplexed simple readers of the Bible that Divine Omnipotence should approve of one so plainly contemptible to us. The story of Jacob gets its vital importance from what it makes us think of God.

Our confusion of mind arises chiefly from the

habit of attributing to God the likings and dislikings, the sympathies and antipathies, we observe in men. It is the elemental God all over again, the God who intervenes in our affairs or refuses to intervene in them, showing kindness here and indifference there, talked over by our beseechings at one time, and at another turning a deaf ear. This is the God whom plain men find so bewildering. He has no principle of action that we can discern, and no continuity of purpose. Accepting Jacob, a man whom we should call a cheat, he rejects Esau, who, when all is said against him, remains a manly and straightforward sportsman.

Now we can never understand the Bible till it becomes clear to us that the real God can be neither arbitrary, erratic, nor inconsequential. Whatever in the Bible seems to lend itself to this interpretation must be a matter of ancient as against modern phraseology, of ancient as against modern habits of thought. For example, the prophet Malachi puts into the mouth of Jehovah the words, also quoted by St. Paul, "I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau." That this should be understood as referring to the men themselves must be out of the question. The Father could not hate a son, especially a son with

so much good in him, nor prefer one of His children to another. With similar common sense we must take the many Scriptural references to mercy shown to the one and withheld from the other, according to what seems to us Divine caprice. It is not enough to see God with the right of acting as He wills. We must see Him as acting justly. The verbal usages of two and three thousand years ago, often obscure to the translators, cannot, in all fairness, be allowed to stand between us and the truer knowledge of the ultimate Infinite Fatherhood to which we finally attain in Jesus Christ.

IV

From Him who always gives all to all, both Jacob and Esau alike won that they worked for. Esau's ideals being material, he reached material ends. Jacob's being spiritual in the main, he won in the main those spiritual things on which his heart was set. By Divine Omnipotence nothing would be taken from the one and given to the other; nothing would be taken from either. Each obtained to the full what he had trained himself to receive. Esau was not liked the more for his straightforward manliness, nor Jacob the less because there was a base streak in him. The God who can never fail nor favor

any one, because He always gives all to all, must of necessity care for both alike. The advantage rests with him who can make the better use of the common heritage of Love.

Here we perceive that a mixed character like that of Jacob can nevertheless possess its value. What it amounts to is this: that Esau, a man of rich endowment, lived for a lower set of aims; Jacob, a man of many weaknesses, reached toward the highest. Even in those acts of his which we condemn there is something to be said for him.

For the human race had not yet developed a definite standard of honor. Truth, as we have seen of fact, was still pliable, adaptable. Its outlines were vague, as they always are with people in primitive cultural conditions. The end to be gained was the chief consideration, not the means of gaining it. A man told the truth when he could conveniently; when he could not, it was no disgrace to fall back on invention. It was naïvely assumed that the direct method was the natural one, just as it is so assumed among children. Fair play begins only when the ethical sense has grown up to it.

Of this lack of ethical sense three instances are related, two of Abraham and one of Isaac, so

similar that they may represent three separate legends founded on one fact, or they may be what they purport to be, three separate repetitions of the same bit of family strategy. The detail is unimportant. What we have to observe is the nonchalance with which the historian credits each of these patriarchs with falsehood, discovery causing no chagrin. During his stay at the court of Gerar, Abraham, fearing that Sarah's beauty would so smite the king that he himself would be slain in order that the sovereign might marry the widowed princess, falls back on the simple course of declaring her his sister. In Egypt he adopted the same method. Isaac, on visiting another king of Gerar and entertaining the hereditary fear on Rebekah's account, follows his father's example. Both patriarchs were reproached with throwing temptation in the way of others, but not for misstating the facts. Recourse to misstatement seems to have been held, not only in the earlier pages of the Bible, but in all the ancient literature of the world, a lawful measure of defense.

From the point of view of their time Rebekah and Jacob were within their rights. Since they had a high object to gain, merit lay in gaining it successfully. Once they were successful, they

had nothing on their consciences. Ruse, subterfuge, and falsehood were expedients which any man would use when his cause was righteous. Jacob's cause being that of God and mankind, he could only judge, with the judgment of his epoch, that the end justified the means.

V

For with all his shortcomings this complex character made God the touchstone of his life. The universal blessing which Abraham beheld afar off, and Isaac a little nearer, he was seeing as nearer still. In the hope of it he lived by day, while he dreamed of it by night. It is perhaps in his dreams that the modern mind will most easily perceive how deeply it entered into his essential self.

To escape the vengeance of Esau he was on his way to Mesopotamia, otherwise Haran or Padan-Aram, according to his mother's plans.

"And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba, and went toward Haran. And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set. And he took of the stones of that place and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed."

It is permissible, in the modern psychological

spirit, to read in this dream the release of a dominating purpose and desire.

"And behold, a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven. And behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And behold, the Lord stood above it, and said:

"I am the Lord God of Abraham, thy father, and the God of Isaac. The land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed. And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth. And thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south. *And in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.*"

By these words he felt the hereditary mission confirmed to him. Esau was dethroned; he himself was chosen. Where we see easily enough that he who lent himself to spiritual uses became the transmitter of spiritual good, while he who was materially minded was of necessity set aside, the ancients understood nothing but the action of God's love and God's hate. A God who could hate men was still among their possibilities. He could be, as Abraham had perceived, an Almighty, Everlasting God, and yet be subject to human limitations.

This becomes further evident in the Genesis narrative as it tells of Jacob's awakening.

"And Jacob awakened out of sleep, and he said: 'Surely Jehovah is in this place, and I knew it not.'"

A Jehovah who could be in one place and not in another was part of his understanding. That is to say, God could be seen as Almighty and Everlasting, but not as Universal. Omnipotence had become a concept; Omnipresence had not. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, though glorified beyond the God who walked in the garden in the cool of the day, was still God in the image of man. He lived in the sky. He went up and came down. He could be here today and gone tomorrow. Jacob could sleep in a place where he supposed that God had not been present, and learn to his surprise that He had visited the spot.

VI

Jacob had visited the spot because His intentions were beneficent.

This fact having been established by Abraham, it was one with which to make further experiments. Jacob's position with regard to the spiritual was precisely that of the scientist today in dealing with the physical. It was an

attitude of inquiry and of pushing on. The test must be empirical, something to be proved as a fact by personal demonstration. He may be called the first of that band, often discredited by theorists as to God, but increasing rapidly in our own generation and century, who insist on obtaining their knowledge of the Divine at first hand. They take one step at a time. If the results of that are good, they know they may take another step. Should the results of the second step prove wrong, they infer that they have made a mistake and begin again.

Their main point is that God is no longer a Mystery preached to them by some one else. He is the Working Force with which they themselves, as individuals, are most vitally connected. In proportion as they learn to comprehend Him, they find Him a Power to be utilized. Jacob was the first, as far as we are informed, to prove God in this way of personal relationship. As Abraham put Almightiness to the test, so the son of Isaac ventures to test God's care.

"If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God."

In Jacob's challenge it is the first time we hear the words which ever since have reverberated through human history and in all men's hearts—*my God*. It is the first time that the Almighty and Everlasting is seen as an individual's possession. The relationship is mutual. If the Almighty and Everlasting can possess His child, then His child can possess the Almighty and Everlasting. The great contribution which Jacob made to the thought of mankind is that God was *his*. He was not what Zeus was to the Greek, or Jove to the Roman, a being of mightier race, but instinct with lusts, angers, loves, and hates. Still less was He what Moloch or Baal was to the other Semitic races, a monster whom it was forever needful to propitiate. Jacob's discovery as to God was that of an Almighty One who cared for the individual. His care came down to the little things so often more essential to man's life than the greater things. He would be with him in the way by which he went, and would give him bread to eat and raiment to put on. Between God and man the connection would be intimate. God was the Great Storehouse, from which food, raiment, protection, success, and all other blessings were to be drawn at need.

VII

It is not claimed that Jacob was sure of this at first. It was too daring an idea to take on mere assumption. He expressed the possibility with an *If*. The hope was one to establish point by point, and by experience. Speculation could do no good. Once the suggestion had come to him that the power of the Almighty was engaged on his behalf, he could do no more than go on and see whether his reasoning were right or wrong. It might be wrong. It was not impossible that the God who meant eventual blessing to proceed through him to all mankind might, in the humbler matter of food, raiment, protection, and success, leave him to depend on himself. On the other hand He might watch over him. If he, Jacob, advanced cautiously, laying down his causes and taking up his effects, he should be justified in drawing his conclusions. It was an immense experiment, and nothing but the facts of life would enable him to be sure of the results.

To making this experiment the rest of his career was given up. It was given up, with issues both varied and decisive. Never was there a man who more obviously reaped what he had sown. Where he sowed to the flesh, as St. Paul

put it later, of the flesh he reaped corruption; where he sowed to the Spirit, of the Spirit he reaped everlasting life. His personality became the battle-ground of good and evil forces. Great rewards and great anguishes came on him by turns. If in his youth he was crafty, subtle, and mean, he passes with the years up to the plane of the cosmic struggle in which only giants can engage. He is our first instance of a man of high spiritual yearnings trying to overcome his temperamental basenesses. The material and the spiritual worlds are not only in conflict in his soul, but in contact. The fight is hand to hand. Now the one and now the other seems the victor, till in the end the spiritual man emerges as a prince who has power with God.

The account of what was perhaps his supreme inner experience is one of the most obscure passages in the Old Testament, and yet it has always haunted the imagination. In it a single point stands out as of clear significance, the man's use of the resources he had found in God to strengthen and purify himself. This he has done successfully. After trials, vicissitudes, and fears beyond the common lot, he has become a new man, meriting a new name.

"And Jacob was left alone. And there wres-

tled a man with him till the breaking of the day. . . .

"And he said: 'Let me go, for the day breaketh.'

"And he said: 'I will not let thee go except thou bless me.'

"And he said unto him: 'What is thy name?'

"And he said: 'Jacob.'

"And he said: 'Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel; for as a prince thou hast power with God and with men and hast prevailed.'"

VIII

Who this Wrestler was we cannot say. What the wrestling meant we can only surmise. But the fact that Jacob, the Supplanter, who had tricked his brother out of his heritage, has so developed as to become Israel, *the Man who Strives with God,* is for him who runs to read. He could so easily have gone to the bad, and he has gone to the good. He could so easily have been dragged down by his low tendencies, and he has risen magnificently above them. To save himself he has striven with God, and God with him. If with evil the fight has been hand to hand, the striving with God has been equally

close. "I will not let thee go except thou bless me."

It is all in these few words—the desperate clinging not to lose hold on the Highest.

If he is the Prince who has Power with God, it is not mere favor that has given him this preference. He has won it. He has won it by the conquest of himself. Long before the distinction between right and wrong, native to the childhood of the race, had worked out into the more advanced concepts of righteousness and sin, this man's wrestling with the Higher Principle had made him aware of a personal standard to be reached if he would keep near to God. Keeping near to God, he reaches the end of his experiment in the knowledge that God keeps near to him.

So one whom we find it hard to think of sympathetically gives to the race the new idea that not only does man belong to God, but God belongs to man. He belongs to more than man in that He belongs to His whole universe. But man has risen far toward the Highest when he can look up into the Infinite—and say, *"Mine!"*

MOSES DISCOVERS THE ONLY GOD*

IT is not to be supposed that in accepting Jehovah as their God the mass of the Hebrew people gave up their belief in other gods. Jehovah was the God of gods, the Lord of lords, but lords and gods were many. In the pantheon He was the one who had a special favor toward the Hebrew race, and so the Hebrews rendered Him their fealty. He was *their* God, and because He was their God He was the greatest God. Their certainty of this was not unlike that of the modern man with regard to his country or his religion. Because the country is his it is the best country; because the religion is his it is true. Of this reasoning the comic element did not for the Hebrews invalidate the force any more than it does among ourselves.

But though Jehovah was their national God, they did not deny godhead and power to other

* Some of the translations giving the incidents in the life of Moses are those of Prof. C. F. Kent, of Yale University, taken from his work, "Heroes and Crises of Early Hebrew History."

national gods. It was an inferior power and an inferior godhead, because other nations were inferior to them. As to that they had no question. It was true that other peoples despised them, but they could avenge themselves by despising other peoples. The game was the one not unknown today, in which all are quits. The superiority of what *I* believe, and of what belongs to *me,* was something of which the Hebrew of old was as keenly aware as the Englishman or the American, the Protestant or the Catholic.

I

Both toward their own and toward other gods the attitude of the Hebrew rank and file was what, for want of a better word, we might call sectarian. It was certainly the nearest parallel in the ancient world to sectarianism in the modern. Just as each Christian body considers itself to be the true Church, and everything else a sect partly, and yet not wholly, disqualified, so the Hebrew nation looked on itself as a special élite among separated brethren.

And in the same way that every now and then a Protestant becomes a Catholic or a Catholic a Protestant, or still oftener one kind of Protestant another kind of Protestant, so in the ancient world it happened that the worshiper of Jehovah

became the worshiper of Baal, or of Ashteroth, or of Moloch, or of Dagon, or of some other god who might do what Jehovah seemed indisposed to do. It must be remembered that when the early Hebrew lapsed into what we call idolatry, he was not forsaking a God whom he knew to be true for one whom he knew to be invented. He was passing from one to another among those whom he recognized as real gods. He might be faithless to the God to whom he had been dedicated at his birth, but in that he was no worse than the Catholic who becomes a Protestant or the Protestant who becomes a Catholic. It was another school of the same cult. The worship of Jehovah was undoubtedly the purest worship, but it seems to have lacked an emotional quality which a primitive people craved for. There were times when the whole nation, or almost the whole nation, went after the more dramatic and sensational.

In the worship of the other gods there was color, movement, something to look at. The attraction was boldly to the senses. It did not tax the mind. Even in cruelty and obscenity there was always something that could be understood. Baal was the Sun; Ashteroth, the Moon; Moloch, Power; Dagon, Fecundity. These were

material symbols which any one could grasp—not abstract ideas like Almightiness and Eternity—and in the temples there were visible things to bow down to. Priests were marching and countermarching, lights were flaring, choirs were chanting, and every now and then there was the poignant experience of a human sacrifice. A father and mother could be watched through the anguish of offering their child. The child himself could be seen, thrown shrieking into the red-hot hands of an iron Moloch, to be drawn into the flames. To an uncultured people the thrill of a ritual of symbol, drama, and physical sensation made a strong appeal.

Moreover, the individual found it easy to think he was worshiping God when he was only listening to the music, or enjoying the spectacle, or being stirred for a moment by some priest's eloquence. The work was done for him. It called for no effort of his own. His contribution was the lending of his presence, with the indorsement of the ear or of the eye. Numbers counted for much. Sectarian self-advertisement was conducted on a scale little short of spectacular. Out-of-door pageants, "on the high hills and under the green trees," proclaimed the popularity of the more theatrical gods over one

of mere spirit. Popularity was accepted as a test of truth, because competition was a watchword. The man who went with the crowd, who rose and fell to the blare of the trumpets or the priest's incitement, was given to understand that he made a sufficient offering of himself, and that God must be satisfied.

Not of one epoch alone was this true, but of every period of Hebrew development, till personal and national suffering compelled at last the perception that an emotional, sensational worship of that which in essence was material could end only in disaster. When it had led the whole people into captivity, it had done its work. The lesson was then finally learned. By the time they returned from the exile, the most blatant of their sectarian tendencies had been overcome, never again to reappear.

And yet the reaction against them had marked the very emergence of the people out of a tribal into a national condition. A large part of the significance of Moses can be read in his exaltations of One Only God as the end of man's spiritual search. In his conviction he was not alone, since monotheism has been a strain in the history of man as far as that history goes back. But it is round his giant figure that the memories

of the struggle first begin to group themselves, while it is in the Law that goes by his name that the concept of One Only God is first set forth.

That Law may be considered as gathering together and condensing into a single line a truth held by many, and in many generations. *Thou shalt have none other gods besides me.* Moses did not discover this truth; he discovered only the manner of expressing it. He discovered the necessity of expressing it tersely, vibrantly, and with authority. Only by something terse, vibrant, and with authority, like a thunderbolt, could he find a counter-agent to the polytheism of his world.

II

Into the life-story of this extraordinary man we have not the space to go in detail. Detail is, however, the less necessary to our purpose in that no other life-story, with the exception of that of Jesus of Nazareth, is probably so well known. Next to Jesus of Nazareth he is perhaps the most lavish benefactor of the human race. Assuming that the civilization of Europe and America represents the high-water mark of human progress to date—which may be contested—it is to Moses that we may look back as the man who gave it its first decided impulsion.

That is to say, it is in Moses that we find the first clear, positive statement of the principles which, during all their more modern history, Europe and America have been trying to apply. The rights of God; the rights of man; the relationship of God to man and of man to God; the relationship of men to each other; all these have been thought out by him and expressed with a clarity which gives us perhaps our first great human document. This document remains, too, the world's masterpiece in conciseness.

Nowhere do we find anything to equal it for the rare merit of the much-in-little. Nowhere do we find sequence of thought graded in a way to cover so much ground. All codes of law can be found here in epitome, with the marvelous achievement that, in principle at least, nothing is left out.

III

The man's early history reads like a fairy-tale. Born at a time when the increase of Hebrew population was rousing the jealousy of the less prolific Egyptians, the Pharaoh of the day not only enslaved the descendants of Jacob, but commanded that their male children should be slain.

"Now a man of the house of Levi had married a daughter of Levi. And the woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was a beautiful child she hid him for three months. But when she could no longer hide him, she took for him an ark of papyrus reeds, and daubed it with bitumen and pitch, and after she had put the child in it, she placed it in the reeds by the bank of the Nile. And his sister stood at a distance to learn what would be done to him.

"Now the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe in the Nile, and while her maids were walking along beside the bank of the Nile, she saw the ark among the reeds and sent her waiting-maid to bring it. And when she opened it and saw the child, behold, the baby boy was crying. And she had pity on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children. Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call a nurse of the Hebrew women that she may nurse the child for you? And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Go. So the maiden went and called the child's mother. And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Take this child away and nurse it for me, and I will give you wages. Then the woman took the child and nursed it. But

when the child had grown up she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses, for, she said, I drew him out of the water."

IV

The further education of the lad was that of an Egyptian prince. That is to say, whatever the world had to offer of learning, luxury, and the broader outlook became part of his upbringing. Knowing himself a Hebrew, he knew himself also as the only Hebrew fitted for national leadership. It is probable that the thought of national leadership came to him early, growing with his growth, till, as a vigorous young man, it was his consuming ambition. Like many consuming ambitions it urged him to the work before the time and himself were ripe for it. Possibly all he saw as yet was freedom for a band of slaves, whereas his mission was to carry on the work of blessing all the nations of the earth to which his people had been called.

It is the fact to keep before ourselves in following his development. The freeing of this band of slaves would have been an incident of no higher import than the freeing of any other band of slaves. Had it been all that Moses had to do, his story would hardly have been worth

telling. He would certainly not have become what he is today, the figure who, next to Jesus Christ, looms up for the European and the American as perhaps the most colossal of all time.

"Now it came to pass in those days, when Moses had grown up, that he went out to his kinsmen, and saw their tasks; and he beheld an Egyptian smiting a Hebrew, one of his kinsmen. And he looked this way and that, and when he saw that there was no one in sight, he smote the Egyptian and hid him in the sand."

This was doubtless to have been the beginning of his campaign. With enthusiastic backing from his people they might soon begin the returning march to Canaan which had been a secret longing for four hundred years. He may have been looking for that backing when he again visited his people the next day.

"And he went out on the following day and saw two men of the Hebrews striving together; and he said to the one who was doing the wrong, Why do you smite your fellow workman? But he replied, Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you intend to kill me as you killed the Egyptian? Then Moses was afraid, and said, Surely the thing is known. When, there-

fore, Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from the presence of Pharaoh, and took up his abode in the land of Midian."

For another forty years, according to the ancient reckoning, the one-time prince was a shepherd in the employ of a priest of Midian, whose daughter he had married. The mission of freeing his people seemed altogether at an end. The world had no need of him. He was not only ignored; he was forgotten. The gifts which he must have recognized in himself had seemingly no purpose. Both he and they were apparently to be thrown away. Keeping sheep was all he was fit for, and during the years of what we should call his prime he kept them patiently.

Moses in Midian is an example of the value of monotony. Waiting years can be years of gathering force. They can be years of gathering force because the inner self is being filled, like a well or a reservoir, with creative strength. Only in solitude, or at least in quietude, can this ever be accomplished. A life that too early drains its resources, as Moses had been impelled to drain his, is emptied before its real work has begun. A restless life, frittered away on trivial

things, can never be anything but a vapid life. The years in which men and women seem never to get beyond drudgery, but go on with drudgery faithfully, are often those in which the spirit is gathering the impetus for further pushing on.

V

"Now Moses was keeping the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the wilderness, and came to the mountain of God, to Horeb.

"Then God called to him, saying, Moses, Moses!

"And he said, Here am I.

"And he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob.

"And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God."

In the fuller accounts of this incident Moses was lifted into an ecstatic state in which the Divine was manifested to him as a Tree of Flame. It was a light which grew as a tree grows, but which never burned away. The history of the inner self is full of such passings of the mind out beyond the range of the material into conditions of supersensual experience. They occur not only in the Bible—to Isaiah, to St.

Paul, to John in the Isle of Patmos—but to many who have been the world's great instances of saintliness. What it meant to Moses was a vast enhancement of his spiritual life. It was an illumination. It showed to him God as he had never conceived of Him before. It showed him God as so transcendent, so immense, and so all-sufficing that he was afraid to look upon the vision. It was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of his people, and yet the God of his people no longer local, tribal, or sectarian, but as All-in-All. With this revelation Moses was fitted at last for the work from which when younger he had been put aside.

"Then God said, Now behold the cry of anguish of the Israelites has come to me; moreover I have seen how sorely the Egyptians oppress them. Come now, therefore, and I will send thee to Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the Israelites out of Egypt."

Now that the call had come and he had been prepared to respond to it, Moses felt a hesitation unknown to the self-sufficient prince. He had been ready then to do the work himself. Having begun with the killing of an Egyptian, he could have gone on with a still higher hand to other forms of violence. But deeper knowl-

edge had brought a sense of his inadequacy to a task to be done through spirit rather than by force.

"But Moses said to God, Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and should bring the Israelites out of Egypt? And he said, I will surely be with thee; and this shall be a sign to thee that I have sent thee; when thou shalt have brought the people out of Egypt ye shall worship God upon this mountain."

Thus, leaving his sheep and his solitudes, giving up what, after all, had become the ease of a peaceful life, he went forth not only to free his people, but to lay the cornerstone of the civilization of today, and so to bless the world.

VI

Into that civilization Greece and Rome have poured huge elements; the Nordic and Celtic races have brought their contributions, and something has been drawn from the remotest East. But the point of departure is that which Moses discerned as an ever-living and ever-growing principle of life. All other systems have reached the end of their development and stopped. That to which Moses gave the initial driving power can never stop, since it can never reach the end of its development.

There we find the main distinction between what we call a Christian civilization and every other. In the world today there are great civilizations which are not Christian, but they have, as far as we can judge, already done their utmost. In the Mohammedan, Buddhist, and Confucian cultures the ripest period is past. Whatever keeps Japan progressive is taken from the Occident. Christian civilization—to give it a name which it does not deserve—has at least this to be said for it, that low as it is in its present state, it is perpetually on the way to something higher. It is perpetually arriving at something higher. The stages of its growth are like the seasons of a climbing vine: a winter of pause is followed by a summer of new impulse, and each summer draws it a little farther up. The climbing vine can also reach a point beyond which it cannot go, but the system founded by Moses draws from an inexhaustible supply. It draws from an inexhaustible supply and puts its sustenance through an ever-strengthening process of new life. Perfection is its aim, but not its goal, since it can go on to further development when perfection has been attained. It can never become static. Dynamic energy is its breath. Having achieved, it will go on still

achieving; and when man fully reflects God, it will be but at the beginning of its completed work.

During the past ten years there has been not a little talk of this civilization's possible collapse. What we mean is the possible collapse of our present imperfect stage of it. We may see a new winter of the climbing vine, but we have seen other winters, the collapse of other stages, always followed by a new and more fecund spring. Whatever happens to us now, there will be many springs to come, seeing that the principle of Moses makes for perpetual unfoldment.

That principle can be stated briefly. It was civilization on a spiritual basis. It was in the line of Seth and not in that of Cain. All other systems, Babylonian, Egyptian, Canaanitish, were of Cain's seed, and material. True, they had their gods, and the worship of their gods bulked large in the national life; but their gods represented matter and material laws. The spiritual had no place there, or so small a place that it was nearly lost sight of. Moses came down from Sinai with a code new to the human intelligence. Nothing like it had ever been evolved. It was so far beyond its time that the

human race, with all its striving, has never yet overtaken it.

The Ten Commandments did not, even in the time of Moses, represent all law; they stood for the principle of law. They were headings, but headings that covered all the points. Except as headings they did not offer a rule of conduct to the individual; they furnished grounds on which rules of conduct could be built up. To the building up of rules of conduct, rules which worked out in detail what the Decalogue embodied in principle, Moses and the elders of the people immediately set themselves. The heroic accomplishment was the fixing of a basis for individual and collective action which could never be outgrown.

For a people which was to bring the universal blessing to mankind needed such a charter. As a nation which had spent generations in slavery, it would only be natural if the majority lost sight of the Abrahamic mission, but there were always those who never did. By these the hope was kept alive, so that it marked a destiny. Where the rest of the world surged from birth to death, and from generation to generation, blindly, uselessly, not knowing whence they came, or whither they were going, or why they were on

the way, Israel had the knowledge of a destiny to fulfil.

VII

The fulfilment of that destiny called for a nation; the nation called for a Law. The force of that Law will be found in its first provision: "Thou shalt have none other gods besides me."

We are so accustomed to the sound of these words that we can no longer hear in them the trumpet-challenge with which they must have startled the ears of those to whom they were addressed. It was not precisely a new idea, but it was a new principle of action. It was moreover a principle of action with which they had never before been asked to comply. From so complying they had considered themselves absolved by general, if tacit, dispensation. Back into immemorial time they had had other gods than God, and the privilege seemed to have been conceded them. The surprise to the typical Hebrew could scarcely have been less than that to the average man of today were legislation to suppress all our religions but one.

Uttered with a sharp command which took the breath away, the ideal of One Only God was more than a theological dogma which could

be accepted or rejected academically. It was more than the claim of a jealous God to be freed from His competitors. It was a new impulse toward Universal Blessing. That which had floated in the dreams of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, formlessly, chaotically, was now beginning to direct itself toward its end. In a civilization which would not rise merely to fall again, passing futilely away, the vague ideal would have a chance to make itself definite and clear.

In this undisciplined group of tribes, debased by slavery, Moses dared to found a civilization which would be dynamic forever. To make it dynamic forever, it must be rooted in the knowledge of One Only Universal All-in-All. Unless it were so rooted, it would not possess the principle of never-ending development. It would, like all other civilizations, work for a while, and break up. It would produce discords, enmities, wars, and have no contrary impulse striving for love and peace. It would be fertile in poverty, misery, crime, injustice, disease, and have no perception that these were defects to be overcome. It might triumph in material ways, be inventive, intellectual, artistic, but sooner or later it would run

into blind alleys and frustrate its own ends. It was the curse of the civilization of Cain, the civilization that was material and no more, that it was always, in the long run, abortive. It perpetuated nothing. Only through that which consciously reflected the Universal All-Good could man struggle upward to his destiny.

This was the new force infusing the Ten Commandments. In the first law man begins in God; in the second he recognizes God; in the third he responds to God; in the fourth he finds in God the fulfilment of all his tasks and purposes.

He is then placed in the family. Before he is a citizen, a worker, or a friend, he is a child. His duties as a member of a family come before all other duties in their urgency. The good son or daughter, the good brother or sister, dwells long in the land; that is, they enter the whole round of life with the support of that constructive spiritual law which alone promises success.

Having thus honored his father and his mother, a man widens out to the larger social duties. In his relation to others he guarantees them first of all against aggression from himself. He is not demanding his own rights; he is promising to safeguard theirs. Having safeguarded theirs, his own will take care of them-

selves. In the sixth commandment he undertakes to respect his neighbor's wife; in the seventh, his person and the sanctity of contracts; in the eighth, his property; in the ninth, his reputation. Protecting him thus against injury in deed or word, in life, person, property, or name, he goes on to insure him in his thought. The tenth commandment pierces to the root of the whole matter. Guard the mind and you guard everything. All other codes of law deal with surface symptoms only. Moses cleaves to the heart of lawlessness and stops it where it starts. We have here the principle not only of freedom and safety, but of right and power, to which the modern world is only now, slowly, almost incredulously, beginning to wake up.

VIII

Not the least of the traits in this majestic character is the confidence with which he offers the Charter of the Rights of God and Man first to a rabble of tribes, and through them to a rabble of a world. He must have seen how far it was beyond them, how far it would remain for thousands of years to come. Fifty centuries after his time it is still beyond us, so much beyond us that we have dropped into a habit of thinking that we are beyond it. Perhaps he

could foresee, too, that we should learn it parrot-like, by rote, teach it parrot-like to our children, recite it lifelessly in churches, and let the mighty spirit it enshrines lie dead. Nevertheless he offers it, fearlessly, sublimely.

He probably knew that one day it would win. Entering into phase after phase of the civilization it inspired, it would ride on them all, survive them all, give coherence to them all, and be to them all both impulse and objective. No other gods than God! It is all in that. No other point from which to start; no other source from which to draw; no other goal to make for. It would be long before the civilization he founded would reach that state, but having once set out to look for it, it would never turn back from the quest.

In this hope Moses could sing his last chant —or the chant to which his name has been given —before going to his lonely death on Pisgah.

"And this is the blessing wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death. . . .

" 'There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven to thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the ever-

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lasting arms . . . Israel then shall dwell in safety alone; the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; yea, his heaven shall drop down dew. Happy art thou, O Israel! Who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord!' . . .

"And Moses went up from the plains of Moab, unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah . . . And the Lord showed him all the land . . . And the Lord said unto him:

" 'This is the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed. I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither.' "

In all the dramatic history of the human race there is no scene nobler or more touching than that which shows us this superb old man, bidding good-by to his children, his friends, his people, his work, and going up that mountain-side alone. From the summit his eyes actually rest upon the land of all his hopes and longings. Like a strip of molten metal the Dead Sea lay at his feet. The sinuous line of the Jordan clearly defined at its mouth was soon lost in the northern distance. Dotted among the ridges and valleys were the sites, ancient and sacred even then, of

which he had heard from the lips of her who was at once mother and foster-mother in the land of Goshen—Bethlehem, Hebron, Jerusalem, Jericho, Olivet. On the farthest western horizon a faint, blue haze marked the beginning of the sea, and the way to Europe and America.

"So Moses the servant of the Lord died there . . . but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day."

It is not hard to see him as he stood on the bare ridge, lifting his hands toward the scenes which a greater memory than his would sanctify—toward Bethlehem, toward Calvary, toward the unpeopled west, toward the future which was in its ultimate stages to work out his hopes. Thrown into relief against the sky, we see him sinking to his knees—bowing before the Land of Promise till his face is on the ground. Then as he closes the eyes of the flesh and opens those of the Spirit, all earthly landscapes fade in the vision of the King in His Beauty in the Land that is Very Far Off—and yet so near us.

DAVID DISCOVERS THE GOD OF RIGHT

THE impulse given to civilization by Moses and his Law had worked up in David to a kingdom well organized, powerful, and relatively free from enemies. The coveted focal point of the ancient world —the southeast corner of the Mediterranean littoral—had become the home of the Hebrew race. The Canaanitish peoples of the region had not only been dispossessed, but as nearly as possible wiped out. Such clans of them as survived dwelt among the Hebrews as allies, tributaries, or slaves. It was an exception to the tendency of invading conquerors to be absorbed by the owners of the soil. As a matter of fact, it was to counteract this tendency that extermination was adopted as a policy.

"When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it. . . . And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it. And when the Lord thy God hath delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof

with the edge of the sword; but the women and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself . . . Thus shalt thou do unto all cities that are very far off from thee . . . But of the cities of these people which the Lord thy God doth give thee for an inheritance thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth; but thou shalt utterly destroy them."

The revolt of the modern mind against the barbarities connected with the Hebrew conquest of Canaan is entirely due to the part in them attributed to God. Other barbarities have taken place in history and excite but a modified horror. But that the God whom Christians have come to know as the Universal Father should have commanded massacre to follow upon massacre raises concerning Him a doubt which even the loyal find difficult to dispel. Before David was settled on his throne, the whole land had time and time again been drenched in blood, and, according to the Scriptures, God not only approved of this ferocity, but had on occasions been angry when the hand had been stayed.

I

There are, however, three main facts to remember in all our reading of the Old Testament.

1. The custom of the Hebrew writers of ascribing to the direct spoken command of God all that presented itself as duty, we have already had to notice and need not emphasize again.

2. What is less constantly in our mind is the circumstance that the leaders of this people were never wholly unconscious of the great purpose they were meant to serve. They were to become the medium of blessing to all the nations of the earth. To this task they gave themselves at times with a passion of thoroughness which knew no limits. It is a characteristic of the primitive mind that when it begins to apply a good principle, it does not know when to stop. On this point primitive justice, for example, supplies us with many illustrations. A crime sufficiently a crime to be punished publicly was punished terribly. Between the criminal and his belongings, human or material, there was no power of discrimination. One instance of this will be enough to show the lack of what we know as moderation.

During the sack of Jericho Achan, the son of Zerah, had stolen portions of the loot. The crime was traced to him.

"And Joshua said unto Achan: 'My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and

make confession unto him, and tell me now what thou hast done. Hide it not from me.'

"And Achan answered Joshua and said: 'Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel . . . When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.'

"So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent. And, behold, it was hid in the tent and the silver under it . . . And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had . . . And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones. And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day. So the Lord turned from the fierceness of his anger."

That is to say, there was the same vagueness as to delimiting Achan's personality which we have already seen as to facts, and in the telling of the truth. With a man's personality everything

he owned was involved. Because Achan had done wrong, his children, his cattle, and his very tent, all share in the blame. So long as justice was new, there was the tendency to push it to extremes which always goes with novelty. Those who did so were pitiless, of course, but then pity is the latest born of all the Christian virtues. Before the nineteenth century there was little or no pity, not even among those who most loudly announced themselves as the representatives of the Christian Church. There was little pity among Protestants who burnt Catholics in England, or among Catholics who burnt Protestants in Spain. There was little pity among those who forced the Pilgrim Fathers from the mother-country, or among the Pilgrim Fathers when they settled in New England. If late in the Christian era the most enlightened of mankind could have been thus lacking, it is not surprising that the men and women of three and four thousand years earlier should have felt that in a just cause anything was permissible.

Jehovah having given them the commission to bless all the nations of the earth, the nations of the earth must submit to being blessed or be hacked to pieces. Hacking to pieces being an easy form of argument, they threw the responsi-

bility for adopting it on God. God would naturally wish to see them urging the cause for which He had selected them, and must of necessity understand the massacre of the worshipers of rival gods as so much homage to Himself. It must be remembered that to primitive peoples life and death are matters of comparatively little moment. The more elemental the man, the more easily he takes another's life or lets another take his. The motive is what chiefly counts, and where the motive was the carrying out of Jehovah's will Jehovah must bless the methods.

3. For Jehovah, as understood by the early Hebrew, was *not* the Universal Father revealed to us in Jesus Christ. That should be clear to us. He was a tribal God, Almighty, Everlasting, but a competitor of other gods. Though Moses had proclaimed Him the Only God, popular opinion supported him but partially. As a question it came down to the practical. A Universal Father, as much the Father of the Amorites, Hivites, and Hittites as He was of the Hebrews, might never have given them the Promised Land at all. It was only by seeing God as they wished to see Him, as perhaps they needed to see Him, that they could have had the nerve and the relentlessness to use fire and sword

to the last extremity. They might take the wrong way to do the Right, but Right was at least their objective.

II

Pursuing this objective by methods of ferocity, the Hebrew race found itself at last possessed of a country, feared by its neighbors, and with a king on the throne who had the qualities of greatness. Through this king's experience a new perception of Right slowly becomes clear.

For range of emotions and sympathies David has few equals among those whom history throws up above the rank and file. Notably a sovereign, a soldier, a statesman, he is best understood as a son, a father, a lover, a friend, a poet, a sinner, and a penitent. Into his make-up the masculine and feminine traits were poured in a profusion balanced by proportion. His strength is not more remarkable than his tenderness; his tenderness not more appealing than his loyalty and frankness. Male and dominant, easily roused, quickly inflamed, his passions were both surrounded and curbed by the consciousness of God.

His difficulty was the difficulty of his epoch, that of not knowing when to stop. It was plain that there were principles of right and wrong, but not so plain that they applied to kings as well

as to other people. It might have been called an axiom of the time that a king could do no wrong, because anything he did was right. A will recognized by hundreds of thousands of subjects as the law from which there was no appeal could easily render its possessor immune from attacks of conscience. It is the great contribution of David to the world that, with so much to make him callous to the law of right, he first in history illustrates its force.

For having sinned and repented, he could express himself. It is perhaps his faculty for expression which helps the world most of all. Human in every nerve of his superabundant vitality, he could feel as only the passionately sensitive ever feel, and at the same time put his emotion into words. But he could do more. He could put into words the difference which sin makes in man's relationship to God. He could put into words the relief, the comfort, the ease and rightness of life when a relationship to God which wrong has jarred has been re-established.

III

No estimate can be formed of David's character without some knowledge of his origin and earlier struggles.

"Now David was the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehem-Judah whose name was Jesse. And he had eight sons. And the man went for an old man in the days of Saul. And the three eldest sons of Jesse went and followed Saul to the battle . . . But David went and returned from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem.

"And Jesse said unto David his son: 'Take now for thy brethren an ephah of this parched corn and these ten loaves, and run to the camp to thy brethren. And carry these ten cheeses unto the captain of their thousand, and look how thy brethren fare . . .'

"And David rose up early in the morning, and left the sheep with a keeper . . . and ran into the army, and came and saluted his brethren. And as he talked with them, behold, there came up the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name . . . and all the men of Israel when they saw the man fled from him, and were sore afraid. . . .

"And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying: 'What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?' "

It is interesting to observe that the attitude of elder brothers toward younger ones did not differ greatly at that time from what it is today.

"And Eliab, his eldest brother, heard when he spake unto the men. And Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said:

" 'Why camest thou down hither? And with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou hast come down that thou mightest see the battle.' "

As a high-spirited boy, unable to deny the charge of wanting to see the battle, David could only press his questions, till they were repeated before Saul who, standing with Jonathan his son and Abner his general, sent to have the lad brought to him.

"And David said to Saul: 'Let no man's heart fail because of him. Thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine.'

"And Saul said to David: 'Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war.'

"And David said unto Saul: 'Thy servant kept his father's sheep; and there came a lion and a bear and took a lamb from the flock. And I went after him, and delivered it out of his

mouth. And when he arose against me I caught him by his beard and smote and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear' . . . And David said moreover: 'The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine.'

"And Saul said unto David: 'Go! and the Lord be with thee!' "

IV

The account of David's victory over Goliath is one of the most spirited bits of description to be found in ancient writing, but it is a proof of the element of legend in all these narratives, as well as of the nonchalant manner in which the Hebrew historians treated what we call facts, that a little later the death of the giant is ascribed to an entirely different hand.

"And there was again war with the Philistines at Gob; and Elhanan the son of Jaareoregim the Bethlehemite slew Goliath the Gittite, the staff of whose spear was like a weaver's beam." (American Revised Version.)

In the two compilations which go under the name of Samuel, both the David and the Elhanan legends of the killing of Goliath are given with cool unconcern as to which is the correct one,

while still a third version can be found in the First Book of Chronicles. In the life of David the story is used to express courage, prowess, and sympathetic attractiveness. Having done this it serves its turn. Whether he or Elhanan actually slew the champion was a detail which the ancient mind apparently found unimportant. What mattered was the unfolding of a character which in its turn unfolded the idea of God. To this purpose exact happenings between the Israelites and the Philistines had the same relative significance as exact happenings at Elsinore in Denmark to Shakespeare when he wrote his "Hamlet." It is probable that David and not Elhanan killed Goliath, and that Elhanan's victim was Goliath's brother, but whatever the truth, the legend helps to bring David definitely into the service of Saul.

"And David went out whithersoever Saul sent him, and behaved himself wisely. And Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants. And it came to pass . . . when David was returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tabrets, with joy,

and with instruments of music. And the women answered one another as they played, and said:

"'Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands!'

"And Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him. And he said:

"'They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands; and what can he have more but the kingdom?'

"And Saul eyed David from that day, and forward."

He eyed him the more fiercely in proportion as popular esteem recognized him as Saul's probable successor in the kingship. David was soon an outlaw. Hunted from stronghold to stronghold, from cave to cave, he knew all the perils of the man on whose head there is a price. There were years in which he could never lie down to sleep without fear of some murderous attack before morning. Ragged, hungry, homeless, he was driven at last to forsake his country, as he supposed, forever.

"And David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul. There is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines.

And Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more in any coast of Israel . . . And it was told Saul that David was fled to Gath, and he sought no more again for him."

V

He sought no more again for him because the stormy, embittered life was nearly at an end.

"Now the Philistines fought against Israel; and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in Mount Gilboa. And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul and his sons. And the Philistines slew Jonathan and Abinadab, and Melchishua, Saul's sons. And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers hit him . . . Therefore Saul took a sword and fell upon it. And when his armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell likewise upon his sword, and died with him. So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armor-bearer, and all his men, that same day together . . .

"It came even to pass on the third day that, behold, a man came out of the camp from Saul, with his clothes rent, and earth upon his head. And so it was that when he came to David he fell to the earth, and did obeisance. And David said unto him:

" 'From whence comest thou?'

"And he said unto him: 'Out of the camp of Israel am I escaped.'

"And David said unto him: 'How went the matter? I pray thee to tell me.'

"And he answered that the people are fled from the battle, and many of the people are fallen and dead, and Saul and Jonathan his son are dead also."

It was at such moments as this that David's lyric gift reached the height of poignant beauty. In spite of persecution he had never wavered in his loyalty to Saul, nor in his love for Jonathan. Nowhere in literature is there a higher expression of plangent grief than in the lament which now breaks from him. Händel has tried to render it in the Dead March in "Saul," but its nearest counterpart in music is that in Richard Wagner's "Götterdämmerung."

"And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul, and over Jonathan his son:

"'The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places! How are the mighty fallen! Tell it not in Gath! Publish it not in the streets of Askelon lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph. Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, neither let there be rain upon you, nor

fields of offerings; for there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away . . . Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in death they were not divided. They were swifter than eagles! They were stronger than lions! Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet, with other delights, who put ornaments of gold upon your apparel! How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thine high places! I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan. Very pleasant hast thou been unto me. Thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women. How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!'"

VI

Throughout this troubled period one main strain can be seen as running through David's consciousness, the desire to live up to the standard of Right deduced from his growing comprehension of God. It is he who first works out in private conduct the law which Moses had discovered for the world, that in harmony with God all things tend to go smoothly; that in departure from God all things tend to go wrong. In other words, the sense of right which in the preceding generations had been a wild

rage toward good becomes more defined, more sober, more exact, with a clearer understanding of *rights* as the *right* of man. The Great Charter of Moses increased in significance the more it was perceived that the rights of God and Man could not be considered apart. Wrong against one was wrong against both. An injury done to a fellow-man was an injury done to God. A sin with regard to God was a sin with regard to one's fellow-man. Rightness was an attitude of mind and heart. In proportion as it became precise all life was happier and more prosperous.

VII

During the years of trial the working out of this principle had been relatively easy. In those of good fortune, with the kingdom established and his throne apparently secure, the guard was relaxed. It was relaxed in those years of middle life when the passions gather strength for a second onslaught, and ease makes a more powerful appeal than duty.

"And it came to pass . . . at the time when kings go forth to battle, that David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel, and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah; *but David tarried at Jerusalem.*"

Feeling himself, after his years of hardship, entitled to repose, all the bars of his character were let down. They were let down especially at that point as to which earlier incidents show him to have been sensitive, the love of women.

"And it came to pass at eventide that David arose from off his couch, and walked on the roof of the King's House. And from the roof he saw a woman bathing . . . and David sent and took her . . . And she returned unto her house . . . and she sent and told David, and said: 'I am with child.'"

The story of David and Uriah, the Hittite, is one which has always struck the imagination. In David himself we scarcely recognize the hero who slew Goliath and was generous to Saul. Having thrown over his standard of Rightness by abandoning God, all his methods have become debased. By calling Uriah from the front he attempts to foist on him the paternity of the expected child.

"And David sent unto Joab, saying: 'Send me Uriah the Hittite.' And Joab sent Uriah to David. And when Uriah was come unto him David demanded of him how Joab did, and how the people did, and how the war prospered. And David said to Uriah:

" 'Go down to thy house' . . .

"But Uriah slept at the door of the King's House, with all the servants of his lord, and went not down to his house."

A second attempt having also failed, David was driven to a course in which as king he felt himself within his rights—rights which in those days no one would have questioned.

"And it came to pass in the morning that David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by the hand of Uriah. And he wrote in the letter, saying: 'Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten and die.' And it came to pass, when Joab observed the city, that he assigned Uriah unto a place where he knew that valiant men were. And the men of the city went out and fought with Joab, and there fell some of the people of the servants of David. And Uriah the Hittite died also . . . And when the wife of Uriah heard that her husband was dead she mourned for her husband. And when the mourning was past David sent and fetched her to his house, and she became his wife and bare him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord."

For a while it seemed as if wrong could be

worked and good be the result. There is no sign—on the surface, at least—that David and Bathsheba felt themselves guilty or that the shadow of the dead man stood between them. So long as the king's will remained the touchstone of right, neither of them could be condemned. Only by a subsequent lifetime of heartbreaking experiences could David be made to see how wrong puts further wrong into motion.

"And the Lord sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said:

" 'There were two men in one city, the one rich, the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds; but the poor man had nothing save one little ewe-lamb, which he had bought and nourished up. And it grew up together with him and his children. It did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveler unto the rich man; and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him, but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed *it* for the man that was come unto him.'

"And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man. And he said to Nathan:

" 'As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done

this thing shall surely die. And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.'

"And Nathan said to David, 'Thou art the man.' "

VIII

It is possible that David's conscience rejected the charge. He may not have understood it. Fortified within his rights as king, the application would have to be urged home to him.

"Thus saith the Lord God of Israel. I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul . . . Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord to do evil in his sight? Thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. Now, therefore, the sword shall never depart from thine house. Because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife, thus saith the Lord: 'Behold I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house . . . For thou didst it secretly; but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.'

"And David said unto Nathan, 'I have sinned against the Lord.' "

The point to be noticed is David's perception, now that the matter was clearly put before him, that the crime against Uriah was a crime against God. It is hard for the modern reader to understand how trivial was the value set on one man's life. All these records reek with slaughter. The sight of a man hacked to death for a comparatively light offense disturbed no one. As enlightened a prophet as Samuel had, with his own hand, hewed a man in pieces, and had done it "before the Lord." David himself, advanced as he was, spiritual as he was, had, on taking cities, put every man, woman, and child in them to the sword. That God could require any one man's blood at his hands would have seemed to him incredible. A man was only a man, and in this instance a Hittite, one of a conquered race, who had no rights in any case. If he, the king, wished to marry the man's wife, it was entirely legitimate to get rid of him. That David was not at ease in his mind is shown by the secrecy of his proceedings, but that it was an act that could be ranked with the rich man's taking the poor man's lamb broke him down with the sense of his dishonor. That you cannot do wrong without also inducing wrong was the principle on which David was to

learn the contrary principle that right induces right.

"And the Lord struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David, and it was very sick. David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in and lay all night upon the earth. And the elders of his house arose and went to him to raise him from the earth, but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them. And it came to pass on the seventh day that the child died."

David's idea of prayer was that of the less developed everywhere. If he strove long enough and hard enough, he might induce God to change the Eternal Mind. It was a matter of being importunate. By being importunate he might get what otherwise God did not intend to give him. If God could be seen as intending to give him what would do him good, his prayer would be answered by getting what would do him harm.

"And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead . . . But when David saw that they whispered David perceived that the child was dead. Therefore David said unto his servants:

" 'Is the child dead?'

"And they said: 'He is dead.'

"Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the Lord and worshipped. Then he came to his own house. And when he required they set bread before him, and he did eat. Then said his servants unto him:

" 'What thing is this that thou hast done? Thou didst fast and weep for the child while it was alive. But when the child was dead thou didst rise and eat bread.'

"And he said: 'While the child was yet alive I fasted and wept, for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me that the child may live? But now he is dead wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.' "

These last words are striking in that they give the first intimation since the mention of the Tree of Life of a continuity to human existence. That it had not been a hope, it would be too much to say; but it had not been a hope which up to this point had found expression. Such as it was, faint and speculative, doubtless, in David it came before the world, no more to be extinguished.

IX

The sword was never to depart from David's house, and it never did, and yet it proved the sword of God—a two-edged sword, as St. Paul calls it, piercing to the dividing asunder of the joints and the marrow, and cleaving to the thoughts of the heart. The tragedies of his later life are not less moving than Hamlet's, and are often akin to King Lear's. Through them all, however, he works more and more toward the ideal which came to him first with Nathan's "Thou art the man." Wrong is always abortive; Right alone is constructive enough to bring a man out to success.

At some time in his life he embodied this philosophy in words which both tradition and criticism have ascribed to his pen. They are so sober, so restrained, that they sound like the last conclusions which come only when the passions have spent themselves, and joy and sorrow can alike be appraised.

"Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity, for they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. Trust in the Lord and do good; *so* shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself

also in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass . . . Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright man; for the end of that man is peace."

ISAIAH DISCOVERS THE GOD OF ALL MEN

WE have dealt hitherto with personalities only. The earlier Hebrew literature, as has been pointed out, is dramatic and biographical. We pass now to a new development, one in which all the cultural spirit of the race is gathered together and summed up, that of prophecy. Prophecy looms so large in all the later books of the Old Testament that a few words on the subject in general may not be out of place.

I

The function of a prophet covered all those forces which both mold and express public opinion, and which among ourselves are divided among many agencies. Imagine a state of society in which there were no parliaments, no congresses, no elections, no newspapers, no clubs, no churches, no theaters, no colleges in the modern sense, no lectures, no science, no magazines, and very few books. Education was confined to that given to religious teachers in what were known as the Schools of the Prophets.

The prophets occupied the place now held by teachers, preachers, politicians, and speakers along professional lines. Their duties were to instruct, to advise, to rebuke, to warn, and to encourage. In warning, as also in encouraging, they were obliged to point out possible results of present courses of action. Inferring these results by a process of deduction, they were often so correct that a power of prediction was ascribed to them. They became known as seers. The forecasting of the future was, however, a small part of their mission. As a means to the ends they were seeking it was practically never used except on occasions of great moment. Considering it only as deduction, though it is often much more, it is generally easy to see the perfectly reasonable grounds on which their arguments as to future things were based, the work of Isaiah himself offering a case in point.

II

In Isaiah we come to one who is little more than a name, though a great name. To help us paint his portrait in the gallery of history we have but the shadow of a personality. His influence on the world has been entirely that of vigorous or enraptured thought. Of his private

life we know little outside his own allusions to himself, and they are rare. From scattered references we understand that he lived through the four reigns which marked the turning point of the kingdom of Judah toward decline. He was a married man, with at least two sons, and he dwelt in Jerusalem. His father's name was Amoz, and there is some slight reason for thinking him of royal blood. Isaiah was certainly a member of the aristocratic classes and, like Moses, had received all that his time could offer him in the way of intellectual training. During the reign of Hezekiah in particular his connection with the court was intimate. Otherwise his personal history is lost in the utterances of the poet, the prophet, and the spiritual statesman.

For it is as a spiritual statesman that he not only impressed his own time, but impresses ours. His outlook was international. His policy was world-wide. Preoccupied first with the mission of the Hebrew people, he sees that mission in relation to the destinies of other nations, and in the effect of other nations on his own. He is the first, and almost the only, Hebrew writer of the older school to take this stand. The others, for the most part, have the vision turned inward. If it goes outward at all, it is to the

little peoples round about them. In Isaiah we find a soul whose hopes, fears, indignations, and yearnings for the future embrace the world, with a message for which time has no limits to set, while civilization finds in it nothing to outgrow.

He is all message—as he himself says—"a voice crying in the wilderness." He is a voice crying in the wilderness especially in times of upheaval like today. In those stresses through which the nations pass periodically, when, as in Isaiah's own phrase, their hearts are moved "as the trees of the wood before the wind," he has exactly the right word to say. It is a word so needed at all times, and so markedly needed in this third decade of the twentieth century, that it is a pity he should be so little understood. The greatest of all the prophets, undoubtedly the most heart-stirring poet and preacher whom the Old Testament presents to us, his flaming words are no more than dead letters to the vast majority of both Jews and Christians, for want of a little explanation. In churches and synagogues a few passages are read from time to time, not always those in which his teaching is most vividly conveyed, and little impression is produced beyond that of noble but meaningless

language. Scholars alone have taken the trouble to understand him, but by them he is now so thoroughly explained that there is the less excuse for the ignorance within the churches of this most moving of all the messengers of God, next to Jesus Christ.

III

It will be the object here to give a single clue by which the everyday, unscholarly reader may be able to follow his general thought, even if particular passages and phrases still remain obscure.

First, let me point out that the book taken as a whole may be called a collection of magnificent fragments. There is no one topic raised, discussed, and carried to a conclusion. The book gives us but portions of what the prophet has uttered at times when only an outburst, a lyric, a cry of sorrow, of derision, of ecstasy, has been written down. This has been added to what was said at another time, and both to what was said at another time still, and all in such a way that we have no more than broken utterances strung together, making no completed whole. There *is* a whole, as will presently be seen; but when we read, let us say, a chapter, we have for the most part mere excerpts—noble ex-

cerpts, it is true—detached from each other. They are like unrelated gems—pearls, rubies, emeralds, sapphires, diamonds, strung at random together, not to form a necklace, but with the object of preserving them, and yet so strung that a further purpose can be discerned. That purpose will be evident, I hope, when we have reached our clue.

To this difficulty we must add a more serious one in the question as to whether what we know as the Book of Isaiah was written by one prophet or by two. As a matter of fact the first thirty-nine chapters seem to constitute one work, and the remaining chapters another. Between the two there are differences of style, matter, and locality, and, what is even more important, of epoch. The first part plainly belongs to Judah in the decline of the monarchy; the second, just as plainly, to Babylonia in the days preceding the return from exile. Scholars are now pretty well agreed that there were two Isaiahs, with a gap of two generations between them.

For our present purpose the subject is of secondary interest only, in that our search is centered on the expanding concept of God. Where we find that expansion we are more or less indifferent to the name under which it is

recorded. Just as America is America whether it was discovered by Christopher Columbus or by Leif Ericson, so the discovery of God is to us the matter of importance, not the person whose name is attached to a particular portion of the work.

At the same time, the message of the two Isaiahs is so similar that it is not strange that the ancient scribes—who were permitted to take many liberties with their text—should have merged them into one. Each is the complement of the other. The First begins; the Second carries out. The burden of the First is that a nation whose aims are material will come to disaster; the burden of the Second, that a nation which has come to disaster can, in proportion as it sees its former errors, be restored. Specifically, the First foresees the result of materialism; the Second, that of revived spiritual thinking. Each prophet is a statesman; each is international. In each the vision widens out from the concept of a mere tribal God to Jehovah as the God of All Men.

IV

Because of its analogies with recent events in Europe there is perhaps no political situation in the ancient world so easy for the modern

reader to understand. He has but to think of Belgium as a buffer state between France and Germany, in dread of being overrun by both.

For the two great powers of the world were still those of the Nile and the Euphrates. Like all strong forces on earth, from insects up to men, they were constantly impelled to strike at each other. Judah, at the focal point, stood between the two and was just as constantly in danger of becoming the battle-ground. Trembling before both, her chief political question was, In which could she find a defender?

The answer of the king, the court, and the people in general, was, In Egypt. That of Isaiah was, In neither. Both Egypt and Babylonia were material powers, while Judah's defense lay in God. If she could boldly throw herself on Him, she would be safe; if she trusted to man, and material power, her doom was already in sight. The prophet could predict it, could announce it, not because he was a fortune-teller specially inspired by God, but because his conclusions were those of sanctified common sense. They applied not merely to Judah, Egypt, and Babylonia, but to all the nations of the time. They applied not merely to the nations of the time, but to all the nations of all times.

He recognized himself as a Voice Crying in the Wilderness, because he addressed a people already sold to material ideals and material gods. No more than in the days when Moses led them out of Egypt were they disposed to trust practical matters to an invisible and spiritual power. Spiritual power they recognized in theory, but in theory only. When it came to the affairs of this life, the material alone seemed safe enough. While the spiritual God was all very well, it was on the material gods that they relied. They set them up in their houses, in their gardens, in their groves. In spite of the many instances when God had rescued them from trouble, according as they turned to Him, it was still on their Baals and their Molochs that they counted. From the beginning of his ministry, this hesitation, this apostasy, was to Isaiah nothing short of anguish.

"Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken.

"I have nourished and brought up children; and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Ah, sinful nation! a people laden with iniquity! a seed of evil-doers! children that

are corrupters! They have forsaken the Lord; they have provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger; they have gone away backward!"

The futility of a purely ritual religion comes next in his scornful lamentation.

"To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord. I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts, and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats . . . Bring no more vain oblations! Incense is an abomination unto me! . . . Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth . . .

"Wash you; make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes. Cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment; relieve the oppressed; judge the fatherless; plead for the widow.

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow. Though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured by the sword; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

But he appealed to a society steeped in the

material. In spite of political dangers the commercial instinct of the race helped them to wealth, and wealth brought sophistication. Rightly or wrongly the men made money, while the women, in their persons and fashions, paraded what it bought.

"Thy princes are rebellious and companions of thieves. Every one loveth bribes, and followeth after rewards. They judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come to them . . . Their land is full of silver and gold, neither is there any end of their treasures. Their land also is full of horses, neither is there any end of their chariots . . . Moreover, Jehovah said:

" 'Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with head high and wanton eyes, mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet . . . in that day the Lord will take away the beauty of their anklets, the lacework, the crescents, the pendants, the bracelets, the scarves, the hair-dressing, the ankle-chains, the sashes, the perfume boxes, the charms, the signet rings, the nose-rings, the state-gowns, the mantles, the shawls, the satchels, the hand-mirrors, the gauzes, the linens, the turbans, the veils, and it shall come to pass that instead of sweet scents there shall be rottenness.' "

A rich, self-sufficient, and morally insolent society, not unlike that of most of the countries of Europe before the Great War, was merely bringing about its own downfall. Just as any serious-minded observer in France, England, Germany, or Russia, to say nothing of the United States, at the end of the last century or the beginning of this, could easily have foreseen that a moral judgment must soon overtake them all, so it required no fortune-telling faculty to enable Isaiah to descry the goal to which Judah was on the way. Trust in material power could have but one ending. It had never had any ending but one; it would never have any ending but one. All the nations had proved it; all the nations would continue to prove it until they gave it up. The only civilization which would not come to ruin was that which was founded where Moses had founded his—in God. Baal, Ashtoreth, and Moloch, who could be paraphrased as the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, might promise whatever they chose; but they would never fulfil anything because they never *could* fulfil anything, since there was One Only All in All.

V

So, when it came to the overpowering question of the day, the alliance with Egypt, Isaiah

was in a position to cry: Make none. God is your strength! Trust Him! Rest in Him! Be sure of Him! Live for Him! Do these things, and neither Egypt nor Babylonia will be able to lay a hand on you. Test the spiritual. Throw yourself on it boldly. Be strong and very courageous. The Lord will defend you.

"In that day shall this song be sung in the Land of Judah:

" 'We have a strong city. Salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation, which keepeth the truth, may enter in. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord forever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.' "

But he was still the Voice crying in the Wilderness. There was no one to heed; there was scarcely any one to listen. Material force being evident in its might, it seemed madness to rely on so tenuous a thing as Divine support. Scorned by his own people, the prophet's vision went further afield, summing up the destinies of other nations. In the "Burdens" of Babylon, of Moab, of Damascus, of Tyre, of Edom, of the Desert, of Farther Africa, of Arabia, of Egypt, though

the variations are national, his theme is always the universal one. The civilization of Cain—all that is not built upon God—shall fail. When it has failed, the supreme lesson will be learned. Those who trusted in force will, through sheer suffering, be turned back to God. It may take long. Everything known as the actual world of their time would probably vanish before men so much as approached this point of view, but they would approach it. They would do so when all else had given way beneath them, but not till they were so compelled. Each one of these powers—and some of them were as masterful as the Russia of a few years ago, as mighty as Germany, as rich as England, as secure as the United States—would collapse, and God would be seen to reign in His everlasting patience.

As for the alliance with Egypt, he protests with the utmost vigor.

"Woe to the rebellious children, saith the Lord, that take counsel, but not of me . . . that walk to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at my mouth—to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt. Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your shame, and the trust in the shadow of Egypt your confusion."

Note the scorn of obsequious Judah with which he refers to the conferences at Zoan and Hanes—border cities between Palestine and Egypt—where the terms of the alliance were to be drawn up.

"For his princes were at Zoan, and his ambassadors came to Hanes. They were all ashamed of a people that could not profit them, nor be an help nor profit, but a shame, and also a reproach."

Vivid is his description of the caravans bearing over the desert the treasures of Judah to a people whose good-will they were obliged to purchase.

"Into the land of trouble and anguish, from whence come the lioness and the lion, the viper and the fiery flying serpent, they will carry their riches upon the shoulders of young asses, and their treasures upon the humps of camels, to a people that shall not profit them. For the Egyptians shall help in vain, to no purpose. Therefore have I cried concerning this: Their strength is to sit still."

Their strength is to sit still! Other translations of this declaration have been given, but none is so expressive of the prophet's message as the old one. Judah's safety lay in forming

no alliance, in doing nothing. Let her be calm, confident. Let her sit still. Outside of God there could be only worry and excitement for every one. Within God there was assurance and prosperity.

"For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel:

" 'In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength. And ye would not! But ye said: No! For we will flee upon horses; therefore *shall* ye flee; and, We will ride upon the swift; therefore shall they that pursue you be swift . . . till ye be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain, and as an ensign on a hill.' "

Left thus alone, conspicuous, lifted up, an example to the world, bitterly regretting the course which had put them there, they would find the arms of the Everlasting Patience open to take them back again.

"And therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you; and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you . . . He will be very gracious unto you at the voice of thy cry. When he shall hear it he will answer thee."

Of the First Isaiah this is the whole theme.

Trust to a material standard of strength brings calamity. The return to the spiritual never fails to find a gracious God. In returning and rest shall ye be saved! Mere earthly power, money, arrogance, a whole civilization, can vanish overnight. God—Love—is always waiting, unchanged, and unchangeable.

Read with this clue, no utterance of this earlier prophet will be wholly unintelligible. There will be many passages of heart-broken reproach, but always interspersed with the most joyous and glorious outbursts of confidence. The nations *will* go wrong, but in the end they will be shepherded back again—through their own pain, if in no other way—and Israel will lead them.

VI

In the same way, and with a similar clue, the Second Isaiah can be read. Fundamentally his message is simple, even if, on the surface, it seems elaborate. It is both a continuation and an enlargement of that of the First Isaiah, with not a little expansion of the outlook toward God.

God will redeem his people. They have now reaped what they have sown and are in captivity in Babylon. Egypt, the defense they chose instead of God, was unable to help them. Suf-

fering having begun to teach them what it is meant to teach, they turn back to the Lord they rejected. In returning and rest shall they be saved. Ultimate salvation is what He plans for them.

That this may come into effect there is one point which the Second Isaiah struggles for. God is the Only God; there is no other. Material force, as apart from God and opposed to Him, must be denied. All that represents the almightiness of matter must also be denied. Baal, Ashtoreth, Moloch, every symbol of matter as more powerful than God, and therefore a god in itself, must be put away from the consciousness. In proportion as his people are able to do that, returning and rest will give them quietness and confidence.

"Thus saith the Lord, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts:

" 'I am the first; and I am the last. Beside me there is no God. Fear ye not, neither be afraid. Have I not declared unto thee of old, and showed it? Ye are my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? Yea, there is no God. I know not any.' "

In contrast to this self-assertion the prophet describes the making of the false god, which

represents matter and nothing else. How necessary it was to force home to his hearers the futility and impotence of what we call an idol, it is difficult for us to realize. Though, we may assume, they knew the image to be powerless in itself, it was in some way identified with the god it stood for, and the god was a force. That it could *not* be a force, that the image embodied non-existing qualities, was the lesson Isaiah had to urge on them.

It is made by workmen; the workmen are men.

"The smith with the tongs worketh in the coals, fashioneth it with hammers, and worketh it with the strength of his arms . . . The carpenter stretcheth out his rule; he marketh it with a pencil; he shapeth it with planes . . . and maketh it after the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man, to dwell in a house."

Not satisfied, apparently, with this, he goes on to be more explicit, more derisive, turning the god into a laughing-stock.

"He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress and the oak which he strengtheneth for himself among the trees of the forest. He planteth an ash and the rain doth nourish it. Then shall it be for a man to burn. For he will take

thereof and warm himself; yea, he kindleth it and baketh bread. Yea, he maketh a god and worshippeth it; he maketh it a graven image and falleth down thereto . . . and none considereth in his heart, neither is there knowledge and understanding to say, I have burned part of it in the fire; yea, also, I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh, and eaten it. And shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? Shall I fall down to the stock of a tree?"

Essential to all returning and rest was this basic reform in the concept of God; and to some extent it was accomplished. Outwardly, at least, the tendency to forsake the One and Only God was overcome. That they should renounce the almightiness of matter in favor of the almightiness of God was doubtless too much to expect, seeing that the world even now has never done so, but something was gained when they renounced the outward symbols. Never again did they set up the image of any power not under the control of God, or superior to God, in their temples or in their homes. Setting them up in their hearts and worshiping them covertly was another thing. Christians themselves do the same, even in the twentieth century. Before

this more subtle idolatry can pass away, the whole human race must shift to another point of view, and that is effected slowly.

VII

"And therefore will the Lord wait that he may be gracious unto thee." With the first turning toward Him, they find Him turning toward them. God's attitude toward men never changes. It is always one of receptive Love. Man's attitude toward God changes as often and as easily as a weathercock, but the Father remains constant, ever eager to welcome the return.

Anticipating this return, He has prepared His instrument. Far in the east, events for generations past have been leading up to a man whose conquests are to revolutionize the world. Five hundred years before Christ, Cyrus, the Persian, was what Napoleon Bonaparte became eighteen hundred years after Him. Having overthrown Babylonia, he allowed the exiled Israelites to go back to their own land.

The degree to which he was chosen for this work is one of the most enlightening passages in the Scriptures. It is not to be supposed that God appointed him to carry fire, sword, and suffering over the known world. From what we

can understand God permits man to work out his own destinies, even through errors and abominations. What apparently He does is to overrule both abominations and errors in such a way that some good may be rescued. The ruthless march of this man from the Persian Gulf to the Ægean Sea was productive at least of the restoration of Jerusalem, and thus another step was taken toward the Blessing of the world which was the hope of Abraham.

Moreover, he was God's shepherd, God's anointed, though he himself knew nothing about God from the Hebrew or Christian point of view. It is not what a man knows about God, but what God knows about a man which is of the first importance. Of the servants of God who have been carrying out His purposes, there must have been countless millions who never heard His name.

"Sing, O ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it! Shout, ye lower parts of the earth! Break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree that is therein! For the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel. Thus saith the Lord thy Redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb:

" 'I am the Lord that maketh all things . . .

that confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited, and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the waste places thereof; that saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers; that saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure, even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built, and to the temple, Thy foundations shall be laid.'

"Thus saith the Lord to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden.

" 'I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight. I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron. And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name am the God of Israel . . . I am the Lord, and there is none else. There is no God beside me. I girded thee, though *thou hast not known me.*' "

So the man whose mighty doings are largely lost amid Oriental legends takes his place in the chain of history for one great, definite act accomplished. To him, possibly, the sending back to their own land of those few thousand captives

seemed a small thing to do, but Isaiah at least understood that in its significance it was a great deed in the history of the world. On it hung the preservation of the civilization of Moses, the civilization founded in God, and on that the whole future welfare and blessing of mankind.

VIII

It was perhaps the use of this stranger in the designs of God which specially helped to enlarge the prophet's vision as to the necessary relation of all men toward God, and of God toward all men. It was one of those periods of turmoil, like the present, in which the essential unity of man's interest is more evident than in days of peace. When the human race will not through Love see itself as one, it is compelled to do so through humiliations and agonies. One of the purposes served by conquerors—Cyrus, Alexander, Cæsar, Charlemagne, Napoleon—is that of a unification in misery of those who would not become one by the use of a higher principle. But whatever the reason, this prophet transcended all the limitations of a tribal God, with the rivalries, brag, and brutalities which such a conception brings with it, to see the God who had been supposed to be the God of Israel only as the God of all the sons of men.

Not that the thought was quite new. A thought hardly ever *is* quite new. It occurs to many, in many generations. It floats from mind to mind, and from age to age, till at last some one comes and puts it into fervid and commanding words, adding it forever to the human treasury. Certainly the First Isaiah had expressed it, but now comes his successor with a conviction and an authority which lifts the new truth before the world as the sunrise lifts the sun.

"Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people from far . . . It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel. I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth . . . Arise! Shine! For thy light is come! The glory of the Lord is risen upon thee! For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about and see! They all gather themselves together; they come to thee . . . The abundance of the sea shall be

converted unto thee; the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee."

This new spiritual Israel shall not only be enriched by those of kindred faiths, but Tarshish also, the vague land which included anything from the Isles of Greece to Italy, and from Italy to Spain, shall bring the treasures of their hearts. The figure in which the prophet describes the white sails of the strangers as their ships hasten over the sea to get the good news of God is one of the loveliest in literature.

"Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows? Surely the isles shall wait for thee, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the Lord thy God . . . And the sons of strangers shall build thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee . . . The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet, and they shall call thee, The City of the Lord, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel. Whereas thou hast been hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations . . . I will gather all nations and tongues; and

they shall come and see my glory . . . and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles."

In these words, which come among the last of those spoken by the Second Isaiah, we find the key to his whole message. It is the key, indeed, to both messages, before the Great Exile, and after it. There is but one power in the world, the Power of God. To ignore that Power, and trust to any other, leads to disaster; but having reached disaster a man can still turn back to Him from whom he had turned away, and find Him waiting to be gracious.

There is, of course, much more than this in these tremendous utterances, but like a silver thread the gospel of the Only God runs from the first word of the First Isaiah to the last of the Second, and on it all illustrating truths are strung. Trust in the material alone leads to ruin, but not to irreparable ruin. Universal Spiritual Love is the Supreme Master and, no matter what the sin, will never let the sinner go. In returning and rest shall he be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be his strength.

JEREMIAH DISCOVERS THE GOD OF PERSONAL RELATIONS

THE public addressed by the prophet Jeremiah had not a little in common with the American public of today. His hearers were cheerful, light-hearted, impatient of anything reminding them that their present conditions were tinged with dangerous significance. Materially prosperous, they liked to think that nothing could disturb that prosperity. Politically safe—at least, since they had developed the art of playing off one great power against another—they barricaded themselves behind the conviction that nothing could break in upon that safety. Theoretically orthodox, they could be practically apostate and yet feel themselves protected by their God. Contemporary nations, with their conflicting ambitions and hereditary strifes, might become bankrupt and break up, but with a little prudence Judah could be secure in her self-sufficient life and in her isolation.

The man who said anything contrary to this exposed himself to so much resentment that few cared to run the risk of retaliation from both Church and State. Church and State were alike vowed to the task of keeping up an optimistic popular opinion. It was assumed that dangers could be averted by not seeing them. Calamity could be avoided by refusing to believe it possible. To declare it possible was to be false to both religion and country. It was to weaken the public spirit, to undermine both civil and ecclesiastical polity. The more the times were menacing, the more the ruling authorities maintained a fictitious confidence.

A fictitious confidence was supported by fictitious prophecy. The members of the prophetical profession, the most influential factor in molding the national opinion, came to the aid of the princes and the priests with messages for which they claimed the authority of God. All Jeremiah's warnings were set at naught. Where he had shown the results that must follow on evil living, they proclaimed the blessing of Jehovah. Naturally enough, the people trusted those who spoke to them most reassuringly. Since they preferred a certain form of life, it was comforting to be told that no

harm could come of it. After all, one prophet was as credible as another. If they were obliged to judge between them, they would choose the man who made life easiest.

"Then said I, Ah, Lord God, behold the prophets say unto them, 'Ye shall not see the sword, neither shall ye have famine; but I will give you assured peace in this place.'

"Then the Lord said unto me: 'The prophets prophesy lies in my name. I sent them not; neither have I commanded them; neither spake I unto them. They prophesy unto you a lying vision and divination, a thing of naught, and the deceit of their own heart.' "

I

Jeremiah's situation was that of a single figure standing against the world. The instance is not rare in history, and while it sometimes wins the admiration of posterity, it gets little sympathy from its own time. The man whose outlook is dark is unpopular; the unpopular man is wrong. It is the almost universal verdict. This man, agonizing for his people's good, was rejected by all but a handful. The rejection was the harder to bear in that he was a shy, sensitive creature with an inborn craving to be liked. He was not a pessimist. He was not a fighter. He was not

essentially courageous. His tastes were for the common lot. Never was irony seemingly more acute than in the choice which marked so gentle a soul, human and genial in all its inclinations, to be one of the sternest of heralds known to history.

It is a curious fact that in all the records of the ancient world there is no life so thoroughly laid bare to us as that of this prophet, and none of which we understand so little. It is not often that either Jew or Christian grasps the fact that in the pages which bear his name one of the three or four most advanced spiritual discoverers is revealed to us. With no exaggeration it may be said that among the pioneers of truth Abraham, Moses, and Isaiah are his only equals. Even these he surpasses in one respect, in that he first in human history puts his finger on the prime essential to national and personal well-being. What that is, we shall see presently.

For the moment let it be said that Jeremiah's contribution to the world does not lie in the accuracy of his pre-vision as to what was to happen to his people. He is one of the greatest benefactors of mankind not because he alarmed, lamented, or denounced. It is true that we have given his name to the "Jeremiad," the futile

tirade against joy, and that to a degree scarcely less than that of his own day we regard him as a somewhat pitiable figure, almost an object of derision. That is because we know so little about him. We know so little about him because we have not understood him; and we have not understood him because from the Book of Jeremiah, as it has come down to us, he is difficult to understand.

II

It has to be admitted that of the more notable books of the Bible that of Jeremiah is one of the most incoherent. A compilation in which many hands were engaged, it is without absolute sequence of either thought or time. In thought, its elements seem to be thrown together at haphazard. In chronology, events which happened late will often precede those which happened earlier, the reader being left without a clue to this disdain of the natural order. Many of its most inspired outbursts bear no hint of the occasions which called them forth. Many sentences are obscure; some are of doubtful authenticity; some are obvious interpolations. The result is that the book is hard to read, a fact which doubtless accounts for the extent to which English and American scholars have neglected it.

Nevertheless, it is easy to reconstruct from its confused materials a story of the prophet's life clearer than most of those which come to us from antiquity. In this we are assisted by the circumstance that so much of our information is autobiographical. Whether the prophet writes with his own pen or whether he dictates to his secretary, Baruch, we get his personal reactions to the events of his time, and to his own duties. It is his intimate life, therefore, which is exposed to us, his heart, his soul, his struggles, his affections. The result, when recognized, is modern, making the appeal which always attaches to the human document.

III

Jeremiah was born at Anathoth, near Jerusalem, some six hundred and fifty years before Christ. Of a priestly family, he probably learned at an early age of the introduction of foreign religious cults which marked the reign of Manasseh, the sovereign of his childhood. No more than at other times in Hebrew history was the worship of Jehovah given up; it was only that new gods were placed beside him in the pantheon. The more power conceded to the Queen of Heaven, the favorite among the foreign deities, the more Jehovah was considered

out of date. The more Jehovah was considered out of date, the more the people brought on themselves those results which were credited to "the anger of the Lord." With his gift for vivid description Jeremiah paints in a few words the activity of whole families in a puerile and perverted ritual.

"Seest thou not what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead the dough, to make cakes to the Queen of Heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger. Do they provoke me to anger, saith the Lord? Do they not provoke themselves, to the confusion of their own faces?"

So persistent was the belief that Ashtoreth, the Queen of Heaven, could do for them what Jehovah could not that years later, when because of the Babylonian conquest many of the Hebrew people had taken refuge in Egypt, much as in 1914 the Belgians took refuge in England and France, the retort could be made to Jeremiah that evil had followed on obeying his behests.

"Then all the men which knew that their

wives burned incense unto other gods, and all the women that stood by . . . even all the people which dwelt in the land of Egypt, in Pathros, answered Jeremiah, saying:

" 'As for the word which thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee. But we will certainly perform every word that is gone forth out of our mouth, to burn incense unto the Queen of Heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto her, as we have done, we and our fathers, our kings and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem. For then had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil. But since we left off to burn incense unto the Queen of Heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto her, we have wanted all things, and have been consumed by the sword and by famine."

IV

To the lad of Anathoth the consciousness of being called to react against this falling away from God came early.

"Now the word of the Lord came unto me, saying . . . 'Before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee. I have appointed thee a prophet unto the nations.'

"Then said I: 'Ah, Lord God, I cannot speak. I am too young.'

"But the Lord said unto me: 'Say not, I am too young. For to whomsoever I shall send thee thou shalt go, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of them; for I am with thee to deliver thee.' "

Shrinking from the duties he was ordered to assume, Jeremiah was both warned and encouraged when the word of the Lord came to him again.

He was to gird up his loins and face any unpopularity that might assail him. The attempt to placate those whom he was told to rebuke, a weakness from which he was not free, would only react upon himself by calling forth their scorn. Reluctant as he might be, he could not escape. God having chosen him, he must obey.

He was to point out to the people that evil threatened them from the north. Purchasing the favor of the Queen of Heaven by the cheap and easy material means of drinks and cakes, they were ignoring the only sufficient protection, which was spiritual. In the north there were two sources of danger, one immediate, the other further off, but both disturbing. The first of the migrations of barbaric peoples which were to

imperil civilization for the next thousand years was already under way. From their breeding grounds to the west of the Caspian the Scythians were coming southward, leaving ruin in their wake. On the banks of the Euphrates the Babylonian Empire was becoming a menace to the rest of the civilized world.

"Then said the Lord unto me: 'Out of the north evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land. For, lo, I will call all the families of the kingdoms of the north,' saith the Lord; 'and they shall come, and they shall set every one his throne at the entering of the gates of Jerusalem . . . And I will utter my judgments against them touching all their wickedness, in that they have forsaken me, and burned incense unto other gods, and worshipped the works of their own hands. Thou, therefore, gird up thy loins and arise. Speak unto them all that I command thee. Be not dismayed at them, lest I dismay thee before them. For behold, I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls, against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes there, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land. They shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against

thee; for I am with thee,' saith the Lord, 'to deliver thee.'"

The Scythians having appeared on the northern border of Palestine, Jeremiah's words seemed about to be fulfilled. He himself expected their fulfilment. It was for this that the Lord had sent him. A people who would not repent for love began to do so from alarm.

But suddenly, for no given reason, the Scythians veered to the east and passed on toward Egypt, doing Judah no injury. The danger was over. There was no need of repentance after all. Jeremiah was discredited. For a time he seems to have dropped out of sight.

Having made a brief reappearance during the reformation under Josiah, he again becomes silent. Only with the disastrous reigns of the last four monarchs of the House of David does his continuous ministry begin.

The four kings followed each other swiftly. Assyria, which had made a protectorate of Judah, had declined and been defeated by Egypt. To Egypt Judah was soon a vassal state. Shallum, otherwise called Jehoahaz, the son of Josiah, had reigned but three months when the Egyptians carried him away. The fire of Jeremiah's inspiration bursts into flame.

"Weep we not for the dead, neither bemoan him; but weep sore for him that goeth away, for he shall return no more nor see his native country. For thus saith the Lord touching Shallum, the son of Josiah king of Judah, which reigned instead of Josiah his father, which went forth out of this place. He shall not return hither any more; but in the place whither they have led him captive, there shall he die, and he shall see this land no more."

Shallum is succeeded by his brother Jehoiakim, who, in accordance with the spirit of priests, prophets, and aristocracy, maintains the tradition of fictitious prosperity. Though under tribute to Egypt he is spendthrift of splendor, going so far, in the building of his new palace, as to compel his subjects to work without pay. Extravagance and oppression being but signs of the national apostasy from God, the prophet cries out against the abuse of power.

"Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by injustice; that useth his neighbor's service without wages, and giveth him not his hire; that saith, I will build me a wide house and spacious chambers, and cutteth him out windows; and it is ceiled with cedar, and painted with vermilion. Shalt

thou reign because thou strivest to excel in cedar? Did not thy father eat and drink and do judgment and justice? Then it was well with him. . . . But thine eyes and thine heart are not but for thy covetousness, and for the shedding of innocent blood, and for oppression, and for violence. Therefore thus saith the Lord concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah. They shall not lament for him, saying, Ah, brother! or Ah, sister! They shall not lament for him, saying, Ah, Lord! or Ah, his glory! He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem."

Three years after the accession of Jehoiakim the power of Egypt is curbed by Nebuchadnezzar, who in the following year becomes king of Babylon. After a period as to which there is some uncertainty the allegiance of Jehoiakim is transferred to the new lord of the world. With Assyria fallen, Egypt exhausted, and Babylon supreme, Judah might look forward to a time of peace and prosperity, consoling her for her loss of independence.

V

Precisely then Jeremiah is moved to rebuke this shallow confidence. He rebukes it by put-

ting forth the truth for which he has been contending all his life, and which he now throws into an almost dramatic clarity. Peace and prosperity were not to be secured by political chances, or diplomatic arrangements. Any such peace would be only that of suspense; any such prosperity a prosperity on paper and no more. Welfare that would have the vitality to endure could be reached in one way only.

"In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim, son of Josiah, king of Judah, came this word from the Lord, saying:

" 'Thus saith the Lord: Stand in the court of the Lord's house, and speak unto all the cities of Judah which come to worship in the Lord's house, all the words that I command thee to speak unto them. Keep not back a word. It may be they will hearken and turn every man from his evil way, that I may repent me of the evil which I purpose to do unto them because of the evil of their doings. And thou shalt say unto them: "Thus saith the Lord: If ye will not hearken unto me, to walk in my law . . . then will I make this house like Shiloh, and will make this city a curse to all the nations of the earth." ' "

Jeremiah's offense was great. He had said

that just as the ancient sanctuary of Shiloh had been destroyed because of the wickedness of people and priests the same fate would overtake Jerusalem.

"And it came to pass, when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking, . . . that the priests and the prophets and all the people laid hold on him, saying:

" 'Thou shalt surely die. Why hast thou prophesied in the name of the Lord, saying, "This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate, without inhabitant"?' "

The indignation was so fierce that the whole populace came together, Jeremiah in their midst.

"And when the princes of Judah heard these things they came from the King's house unto the house of the Lord, and they sat in the entry of the New Gate of the Lord's house. Then spake the priests and the prophets unto the princes and to all the people, saying, 'This man is worthy of death, for he hath prophesied against the city.' "

It was the old and the permanent accusation. The man who saw things as they were was a traitor. He must be done away with. If they dared not kill him, they could imprison him; if

they dared not imprison him as yet, they could at least shut him out of the Temple. But, shut out of the Temple, Jeremiah had still his resources.

"And it came to pass in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, king of Judah, that the word came unto Jeremiah from the Lord, saying:

" 'Take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee . . . from the days of Josiah even unto this day. It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them, that they may turn every man from his evil way, that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin.'

"Then Jeremiah called Baruch . . . and Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the Lord . . . upon a roll of a book. And Jeremiah commanded Baruch, saying:

" 'I am shut out. I cannot go into the house of the Lord. Therefore go thou, and read in the roll . . . the words of the Lord in the ears of the people.' "

The result was general excitement. The people having heard the contents of the roll, the princes would hear the same.

"Take in thine hand the roll wherein thou hast read in the ears of the people, and come."

"So Baruch the son of Neriah took the roll in his hand and came unto them. And they said unto him:

" 'Sit down now, and read it in our ears.'

"So Baruch read it in their ears. Now it came to pass when they had heard all the words they turned in fear one to another. And they said unto Baruch:

" 'We will surely tell the king of all these words.' "

The king, being told, desired that the roll should also be read to him.

"Now the king sat in the Winter House, in the ninth month. And there was a fire in the brasier burning before him. And it came to pass, when Jehudi had read three or four leaves, that the king cut it with a penknife, and cast it into the fire till all the roll was consumed. And they were not afraid, nor rent their garments, neither the king nor any of his servants, that heard all these words."

The lack of fear was part of the unbelief which led to the prophet's final rejection. He was never heeded, but if not heeded he was hated. All that might have silenced him was

done. Imprisoned, tortured, degraded, he continued to deliver his message. National disaster was imminent—but it could be stayed. There was a way of staying it, if the nation would only adopt it. That way lay not in a civil policy, nor in subjection to a military power, nor in religious orthodoxy, nor in ecclesiastical ritual. Nevertheless, there was a way. If followed, it would bring safety, happiness, wealth. It would lead to independence of the foreigner, with a prince of their own as king.

"Out of them shall proceed thanksgiving and the voice of them that make merry. I will multiply them, and they shall not be few. I will glorify them, and they shall not be small. Their children shall also be as aforetime; their congregation shall be established before me; I will punish all that oppress them. And their prince shall be of themselves, and their ruler shall proceed from the midst of them."

VI

Still having princes of their own, they were convinced that the line of David could not be dispossessed. Jehoiakim died and was succeeded by his son, Coniah, otherwise called Jehoiachin. The prophet hails the new monarch thus:

"As I live, saith the Lord, though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, were the signet upon my right hand yet would I pluck thee thence. I will give thee into the hand of them that seek thy life, and into the hand of them of whom thou art afraid, even into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon . . . And I will cast thee out, and thy mother that bare thee, into another country where ye were not born, and there shall ye die. But to the land whereunto their soul longeth to return, thither shall they not return . . . O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord! Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days, for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah."

Three months after this cry Coniah, and the Queen-Mother, with four thousand of the highest in the land, were carried prisoners to Babylon. It was a foretaste of the great Babylonian Captivity, which was still delayed eleven years. They were eleven years of respite, but of respite to no purpose. Coniah being succeeded by Zedekiah, another son of Josiah, priests, princes, and people seemed to be more than ever hardened against God. They had weathered the

worst. God's anger was slaked in the four thousand victims he had already sent to Babylon. No further calamity would come on them. They could begin in the same old way all over again.

During the new reign Jeremiah's offense was in counseling the people to be reconciled to the Babylonian power. Resistance would be useless. Nothing but the needless shedding of blood could come of it. God meant the Babylonians to rule till Judah had repented.

Not only was the suggestion scouted, but Jeremiah was thrown into a dungeon. During the rest of the reign of Zedekiah he was hardly ever free. Only the king's superstitious fear that he was truly a prophet of the Lord stood between him and assassination.

The end came through slow stages of public agony. In the tenth year of his reign Zedekiah, heedless of the prophet's warnings, rebelled against Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar marched on Jerusalem. After a siege of nearly two years a breach was made in the walls, and the Chaldeans entered the city.

"And it came to pass that when Zedekiah the king of Judah and all the men of war saw them they fled, and went forth out of the city by night, by the way of the king's garden . . . But the

army of the Chaldeans pursued after them, and overtook Zedekiah in the Plains of Jericho. And when they had taken him they brought him up to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon in Riblah, in the land of Hamath, and he gave judgment upon him. Then the king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah in Riblah before his eyes. Also the king of Babylon slew all the nobles of Judah. Moreover, he put out Zedekiah's eyes, and bound him in fetters, to carry him to Babylon. And the Chaldeans burned the King's House, and the houses of the people, with fire, and brake down the walls of Jerusalem."

Of the people the majority were driven into Chaldea. Some were left in the land, Jeremiah among them. Of these a number took refuge in Egypt, compelling the prophet to go with them. There he disappears. Whether he died in Egypt or returned to his native land is unknown to history.

VII

And yet the events of his agitated life are no more than the setting to this prophet's main contribution to religious experience. It is not in his warnings to his people that we read his value, nor in his protests against wickedness. Others protested against wickedness whose words were

not sent down to new generations; others predicted the fate that would overtake Israel whose very names are lost to us. If Jeremiah has survived, if for those who understand him he holds a special place in the development of thought, it is because he discovers in God something never emphasized before him.

It is he who first lays stress on the individual's relationship to God, and God's relation to the individual. He discovered the necessity for individual righteousness as the chief factor in a nation's good. To him first it was clear that in God's eyes the unit was not the race or the church, but the man. If Judah was to be saved, it was to be not through the agency of priests or prophets or kings, but by *every one* turning from his evil way. God's dealings, God's care, God's love, included churches and nations of course, but they blessed the individual first.

Jeremiah may be called the discoverer of the individual's responsibility. It was not that this concept was unknown before, but only that it had never before been stressed. It is implied in all previous discoveries in God, but rather as a chemical agent is implied in a substance, before being isolated and released. Jeremiah isolated and released the truth that it is the indi-

vidual who is the child of God, not the political or ecclesiastical system which individuals may combine to form. The man is the first, the man is the last, the Alpha and the Omega.

Now the opposite of this had been the accepted belief. The individual was dear to God because he was a Jew. He was in a state of grace because he belonged to what has been called the Jewish Church. Hebrew by blood, and in the bosom of Hebrew orthodoxy, his spiritual condition became so safe that his conduct was of slight importance. So long as he was loyal to his nation and submissive to Jehovah's ritual he could burn incense to the Queen of Heaven, or commit his favorite sins, and still have nothing on his conscience. Between righteousness and welfare, as between sin and misery, he saw no connection.

It was the great contribution of Jeremiah to the world that he made this connection clear. That is, he made it clear as it was clear to his own mind; he did not make it clear to the conviction of those to whom he spoke. That a spiritual life could control material necessities was to them mere foolishness. Not less absurd was the theory that a knowledge of God's goodness as a basis to a life trying to sanctify itself

would protect them against political enemies, armed with vast military powers.

VIII

Jeremiah was rejected because he endeavored to show that the understanding of God, combined with obedience to God, was of immediate, practical, everyday benefit to the human race. Had he left Jehovah in the clouds, he would have been acceptable. His crime was in bringing him to man, as man's first, only, and ever-present Essential.

The priests, prophets, and princes of Judah, all the civil and ecclesiastical authorities, staked their lives and the national existence on the declaration that Jeremiah was wrong. The individual, they affirmed, could get his knowledge of God only through them, and to them was his first responsibility.

Jeremiah preached the doctrine of direct appeal from man to God, of direct response from God to man. He is the herald of personal spiritual liberty, of personal spiritual responsibility. A man's responsibility is in proportion to his liberty. Because he is free he accepts his share of the burden of his people, of the burden of the world. *Every one* must turn from his evil way. Turning from an evil way he turns to a

good way; and turning to a good way he finds—in proportion to his power to receive, and in the measure that others will allow him to receive—the abundance, protection, and grace of God.

DANIEL DISCOVERS THE GOD WHO PROTECTS

THE simplest way in which to understand the Book of Daniel is to put it on the same plane, though perhaps not on the same level, as the parables of the Sower, of the Ten Virgins, or of the Rich Man and Lazarus. By this I mean that in the part of it with which we are most familiar dramatic narrative has been used to convey a truth sorely needed by those for whom it was intended, but which the writer dared not make too obvious.

He connects his incidents with Daniel, as well as with Daniel's three companions Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. Two of these incidents, that in which Daniel is thrown into the lions' den, and that in which his three companions are flung into the burning fiery furnace, are among the best-known episodes in the world. The author's object in recounting them will, I think, be evident when we learn the purposes for which he wrote.

I

The book itself is doubtless the latest in time of all those which make up the Old Testament. From internal evidence, too complicated to reproduce here, it is possible to date it with almost accurate precision. It was composed in or near the year 165 B.C., some three hundred and fifty years after the return from the Exile in Babylon, and some four hundred after the events which it narrates. The exact date is of vital importance to the understanding of the work.

During the three centuries which intervened after the return from captivity a national order had been evolved wholly different from that prevailing under the House of David. The tendency to place foreign gods side by side with Jehovah had been outlived. Tribal divisions had been lost. Monarchical rule had become obsolete. Supremacy was now attached to the Mosaic Law, with the glosses and definitions imposed upon it by the scribes and doctors. To know and observe this Law down to the last, hair-splitting detail was to be a good citizen. Religious and national life depending on a series of mechanical observances, there was no place for the prophet, and the order of prophets had ceased to exist. The ruler, in as far as there

was a ruler, was the High Priest, but in reality a form of self-government was in force, a kind of theocratic republic, in that extreme popular devotion to the Law which supposedly rendered the Jew superior to all other men. The tendency to be self-centered, exclusive, arrogant, which has always marked the Jew, had been intensified. He was the chosen of God; all others were accursed. The Vision of Abraham, caught and beautified by the prophets, that through the Jew all the nations of the earth should be blessed, had been lost sight of. The national motive being gone, its place was taken by a hard, narrow, desiccating formalism, making the Jew hateful to all other men, whom he hated in return. The Anti-Semitism, so to call it, of the ancient world was probably more relentless than anything known today.

II

In the year in which the Book of Daniel was composed, the Jewish principle of separatism, of isolation, found itself in conflict with a contrary movement. On the northern border of Palestine Syria had grown into a great power. With the exception of Egypt all the Oriental empires had decayed, and even Egypt was in the early stages of decline. Domination making its

way westward, Rome had become a menace to the east, but so long as Rome had not intervened with the full might of her growing strength, the mastery of the ancient historical world, to the east and the southeast of the Mediterranean, was in dispute between Syria and Egypt. The throne of Syria was occupied by the descendants of the conqueror Seleucus; that of Egypt, by those of the first Ptolemy. For a hundred and fifty years Judea was what Israel had been for several centuries, the buffer state between the two dynasties. Long a protectorate of Egypt, it was finally taken over by Antiochus the Third, of Syria. Antiochus having given his daughter Cleopatra as wife to Ptolemy the Fifth, the Syrian suzerainty over Judea was part of the treaty of exchange.

Between these masters there would perhaps have been little choice had not Seleucus the Fourth attempted to take possession of the treasures of the Temple. The High Priest Onias, who refused to sanction this sacrilege, was at once deposed. His brother Jason, having offered himself as a tool to the Syrian king, was put into the sacred office. The Jews therefore became the victims not only of oppression from without, but of treachery at home.

For among the Jews there have always been two contradictory impulses—that toward segregation, and that toward assimilation with the rest of the world. On the accession of Antiochus the Fourth, there was already a party, chiefly of the younger men, eager to make Jerusalem a second Athens, in which the fashions and culture of the west would supplant the ancient customs, grown provincial and outworn.

Under the High Priest Jason a Greek gymnasium, in which the games were of an idolatrous nature, was opened in Jerusalem. To allow of participation in these games the services in the Temple were curtailed. The dismay of the faithful Jews became horror when another priest of the line of Aaron, Menelaus by name, bribed Antiochus into deposing Jason and putting himself, Menelaus, into the High Priest's place. To pay the promised sum Menelaus was obliged to seize the gold in the Temple, and for protesting against this crime Onias, the lawful High Priest, was put to death.

III

Antiochus the Fourth, who had come to the throne with the intention of unifying his empire in the spirit of Greek culture, found the Jewish religion the chief obstacle to his plans. Every

act of insubordination therefore was made a pretext to stamp that religion out. He had surnamed himself Epiphanes, the Manifestation of God. It was enough that the religion of his empire should center round himself. Making an excuse of a quarrel between Menelaus, the reigning High Priest, and Jason, whom he had supplanted, Antiochus attacked Jerusalem, put many of the people to death, sold thousands into slavery, and robbed the Temple of the little treasure that remained. The narrative of these events as given in the two Books of the Maccabees in the Old Testament Apocrypha, the books of doubtful authority, ranks among the most vivid descriptive chronicles in history.

"Antiochus wrote to his whole kingdom that all should be one people, and every one should leave his laws. So all the heathen agreed, according to the commandment of the king. Yea, many also of the Israelites consented to his religion, and sacrificed unto idols and profaned the Sabbath. For the king had sent letters by messengers unto Jerusalem and the cities of Judah that they should follow the strange laws of the land, and forbid burnt offerings, and sacrifice, and drink offerings, in the Temple; and that they should profane the Sabbaths and festival days,

and pollute the sanctuary and holy people; set up altars and groves and chapels of idols, and sacrifice swine's flesh and unclean beasts; that they should also leave their children uncircumcised, and make their souls abominable with all manner of uncleanness and profanation; to the end that they might forget the laws and change the ordinances."

All Scriptural rolls were burnt. The Temple itself was rifled and laid desolate. On the site of the altar of the daily burnt offering, next to the Holy of Holies the most sacred spot on earth, an altar was erected to the Olympian Zeus, the climax of sacrilege being reached when swine were offered to that god. Any attempt to live as a Jew, or to worship Jehovah, was punished with death.

Of the ferocity of this repression one instance will be enough. To eat swine's flesh became the test of the Jew's apostasy, as two centuries later the burning of incense was the test of the Christian's.

"It came to pass also that seven brethren with their mother were taken, and compelled against the law to taste swine's flesh, and were tormented with scourges and whips. And one of them who spake first said thus:

" 'What wouldst thou ask or learn of us? We are ready to die rather than to transgress the laws of our fathers.'

"Then the king, being in a rage, commanded pans and caldrons to be made hot; which forthwith being heated he commanded to cut out the tongue of him that spake first, and to cut off the utmost parts of his body, the rest of his brethren and his mother looking on. Now when he was thus maimed in all his members, he commanded him to be brought to the fire and to be fried in the pan. And as the vapor of the pan was for a good space dispersed they exhorted one another, with the mother, to die manfully."

Six of the boys being mangled and slain with unspeakable brutalities, the youngest was brought. Feeling himself belittled by such courage, Antiochus promised riches, honor, friendship, if the lad would only deny God.

"But when the young man would in no case hearken unto him, the king called his mother, and exhorted her that she should counsel the young man to save his life . . . But she bowing herself toward him, laughing the cruel tyrant to scorn, spake in her country language, on this manner:

" 'O my son, have pity on me who bare thee

nine months in the womb, and gave thee suck three years, and nourished thee, and brought thee up unto this age, and endured the troubles of education. I beseech thee, my son . . . fear not this tormentor! Being worthy of thy brethren, take thy death, that I may receive thee again in mercy with thy brethren.'

"While she was yet speaking these words, the young man said:

"'Whom wait ye ror? I will not obey the king's commandment. But I will obey the commandment of the Law that was given unto our fathers by Moses . . .'

"Then the king being in a rage handled him worse than all the rest, and took it grievously that he was mocked. So this man died undefiled, and put his whole trust in the Lord. Last of all, after the sons, the mother died also."

Against this tyranny of abomination Mattathias of Modin, with his five sons, of whom Judas Maccabeus was to become the most famous, led a forlorn hope of revolt. That is, the hope was forlorn as far as it depended on purely temporal power. That it would depend on purely temporal power was the conviction and the fear which chilled the courage of all but the most inspired.

IV

In the midst of this seemingly hopeless struggle a book was passed from hand to hand, or read aloud in secret assemblies, setting forth the truth which perhaps man needs more than he needs any other truth. It set it forth subtly, in the guise of that history of the past which was still to a great degree a matter of tradition. It is probable that tradition had long preserved the episodes of the Book of Daniel, and that, in the stress of this dark hour, the new religious teacher used them only as a means to urge his message home. It would not be discreet to speak too plainly. A veiled method, anonymous or pseudonymous, was the only one practical. Whatever was said must be put in a way which the wise would understand, while their enemies, if they chanced upon the manuscript, would be blind to it. Merely as a piece of esoteric writing, with its meaning on the surface, and yet hidden from those not in possession of the spiritual alphabet, the Book of Daniel has no parallel in literature.

To a people making their desperate stand against innumerable odds the message was, and is, just this: Spiritual power is the only and absolute ruler of the universe, and always rules

in Love. No material dominion can be so strong, not that of Babylon or Egypt, not that of the United States or the British Empire, but that before spiritual might it becomes as a figment of the brain. Of all lesser material oppositions, those which confront us in daily life, the same thing must be true. Nations suffer, individuals suffer, because they have been unable to bring themselves to believe that the Love of God reigns, and not human suspicion, competition, and cruelty.

This gospel was not new with the writer of the Book of Daniel, but he first threw it into a form which the common man could comprehend. The two Isaiahs had preached it, as had Jeremiah, and others of the prophets. It was, however, implied in what they said rather than declared explicitly. Daniel is so definite that he startles. His examples are chosen to show how practical is the knowledge of God to them who can use it rightly.

V

The book divides itself into two distinct parts. In the first is contained a series of incidents connected with the career of Daniel and his three companions, all designed to emphasize the truth which is the kernel of the teaching. These in-

cidents are given as dramatic episodes, easy for the simple mind to grasp. In the second we have prophecies which are not strictly prophecies, in that they are largely a review of what has already happened, with but a slight forecast of the future. These apocalyptic visions cannot be dealt with here. It is enough to say that the final upshot of their teaching confirms what has already been said in vivid, dramatic narrative.

It must be noted, too, that the book makes no pretense to be historical. Whatever is said from the historical point of view follows tradition, which was often erroneous. The age of Judas Maccabeus was not one of libraries and books of reference. The only available history was contained in the Sacred Books, and these had mostly been destroyed. For all facts of the past the author of Daniel had probably nothing to depend on more stable than his memory.

At the same time we must not forget that to the Hebrew writer along spiritual lines *facts,* as we moderns use the word, were never matters of importance. It was not his object to reproduce them exactly, or to be fastidious as to historical settings. To the author of Daniel kings and princes, dates and personalities, were of only remote significance.

A few examples will be enough to illustrate this point.

"In the third year of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem and besieged it. And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand with part of the vessels of the house of God, and he carried them into the land of Shinar to the house of his god."

No such happening is known to history. Nebuchadnezzar did not become king of Babylon till the *fourth* year of the reign of Jehoiakim, who reigned eleven years before the great disaster overtook him.

"In the same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar, and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hair was grown as eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws."

Of this insanity there is no corroboration elsewhere. The inscriptions which give the outlines of this monarch's life are silent concerning it. If, however, any such tradition existed it lent itself so remarkably to the writer's spiritual purpose that he would naturally make use of it.

"Belshazzar the king made a great feast to

a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand. Belshazzar whiles he tasted the wine commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem."

Belshazzar was not the son of Nebuchadnezzar, and he was never king. He was the son of Nebuna'id, the last of the Chaldean sovereigns, but not of Nebuchadnezzar's line. Little is known of him beyond the fact that in the taking of Babylon by the Persians he fought bravely.

"In that night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was slain, and Darius the Mede received the kingdom."

The intervention of a Median king between the Chaldean and Persian dynasties is an error not easy to account for. The Old Testament itself tells us elsewhere, even if we had no other source of information, that on the downfall of the Chaldean monarchy, Cyrus the Persian became king of Babylonia. The kingship at this time of a Darius is not less mistaken than that of a Belshazzar.

These slips of the pen, of which there are more, are mentioned only to emphasize the fact that the purpose of the book is not historical. The author's mission was more important. His

people were for the most part depending on themselves in a struggle in which the colossal strength ranged against them was likely to be conqueror. To suffer, to fight, to be defeated, to die, was their only outlook. Having practically no knowledge that invincible spiritual power was theirs for the taking, despair was all that gave force to their arms. To dispel material trust, and awaken that in the Love of God, was a task too urgent to permit a man to waste time over dates and happenings.

Last, it must be observed that the hope inspired is chiefly for this world. It is with welfare in this world that the Old Testament concerns itself. A divine protection which skipped this world to fix itself on blessedness after death, as to which nothing could as yet be proved, was unknown to religious teaching till the decline of Christianity, after the so-called conversion of Constantine. As a matter of fact, the faith of the Bible, whether of the Old Testament or of the New, is always pragmatical. It is founded on what it can do. What it can do must be done in the actual experience of men. Nothing else is convincing. It was to the actual and convincing that the author of Daniel appealed.

VI

He begins with the lighter touch, in the realm of things that happen every day. He will show that even health does not depend on meat and drink, but on understanding God.

"And the king spake unto Ashpenaz, the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring in certain of the children of Israel, even of the seed royal and of the nobles, youths in whom was no blemish, but well favored and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability to stand in the king's palace; and that he should teach them the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans."

Among them were Daniel and the three friends whose names were changed to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. Daniel's first thought was for the keeping of the Law.

"But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's meat nor with the wine which he drank. Therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself . . . And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel: 'I fear my Lord the king, who hath appointed your meat and your drink. For why should he see

your faces worse liking than the youths of your age? So should ye endanger my head with the king.'

"Then said Daniel to the steward . . .

" 'Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days. Let them give us herbs to eat, and water to drink. Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the youths that eat of the king's meat; and as thou seest, deal with thy servants . . . And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer, and they were fatter in flesh, than all the youths that did eat of the king's meat."

The incident, relatively slight, was the first of a series of experiences meant to illustrate the might of spiritual power as against that material force on which all but a few of them had been taught to depend.

"Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold . . . He set it up in the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together the satraps, the deputies, the governors, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up."

The festival was of both religious and national significance. On the part of a conglomerate empire it was also to be a test of loyalty to the sovereign. Those who would not worship the sovereign's god would not be true to him, and with those who would not be true to him there was but one course, to get rid of them. For this purpose a burning, fiery furnace had been prepared, into which the disloyal were to be cast.

"Wherefore at the time certain Chaldeans came near, and brought accusation against the Jews . . .

" 'There are certain Jews whom thou hast appointed over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. These men, O king, have not regarded thee. They serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.'

"Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego.

" 'Is it of purpose, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, that ye serve not my god, nor worship the golden image which I have set up? Now if . . . ye fall down and worship the golden image which I have made, well! But if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour

into the burning fiery furnace; and who is that god that shall deliver you out of my hands?' "

The point is in this last interrogation. It was the God who could deliver, and deliver to the uttermost, in the face of all human and material probability, that the author of the Book of Daniel was eager to disclose to a people whose strength was insufficient to its needs. He would deliver, not by some sporadic miracle, but by the working of His law. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego need take no chances. Knowing what they did, they could be sure. To the mightiest being whom up to that time men had ever raised on earth they could reply calmly.

" 'O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He *will* deliver us out of thy hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will *not* serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.' "

Nebuchadnezzar, full of fury at this outrage to his will, commanded that the furnace be heated beyond its customary violence.

"Then these men were bound in their mantles, trousers, and hats, and their other garments,

and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace . . .

"Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished and rose up in haste. He spake and said unto his counsellors:

" 'Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?'

" 'True, O king.'

" 'Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the aspect of the fourth is like a son of the gods.'

"Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace.

" 'Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, ye servants of the Most High God, come forth and come hither.'

"Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego came forth out of the midst of the fire. And the satraps . . . saw these men, that the fire had no power upon their bodies, nor was the hair of their head singed, neither were their hosen changed, nor had the smell of fire passed on them."

The truth in this story lies not in the question of the thing having happened or not, not any more than it does in our Lord's account of the King who went into a Far Country; it is in the fact that in spiritual experience it

could have happened. In material experience it could not. To those who shut themselves up in a material world it is a wonder-tale little above the level of "Jack and the Beanstalk." Those, on the other hand, who know anything of spiritual law see it as a possibility. It could be done. As life is now, it could be done by very few. But a few there have always been who have understood spiritual law, performing by its means works which the materially minded have either derided or denied.

The third example was along similar lines.

"It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty satraps, which should be throughout the whole kingdom, and over them three presidents, of whom Daniel was one . . . Then this Daniel was distinguished above the presidents and the satraps because an excellent spirit was in him. And the king thought to set him over the whole realm. Then the presidents and satraps thought to find occasion against Daniel . . . but they could find none occasion or fault."

But a method was discovered.

" 'We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God.'

"Then these presidents and satraps assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him:

" 'King Darius, live forever. All the presidents of the kingdom, the deputies, the satraps, the counsellors, and the governors, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a strong interdict, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any god or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions.'

"Wherefore King Darius signed the writing and the interdict.

"And when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house—now his windows were open in his chamber toward Jerusalem—and he kneeled upon his knees three times a day and prayed, and gave thanks to God, as he did aforetime."

The presidents and satraps were not long in making their accusation before the king.

" 'That Daniel, which is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the interdict that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day.' "

The king not having foreseen this result, set his heart on the delivery of Daniel, but the laws

of the Medes and Persians not being easily changed, he was obliged to respect them.

"Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spoke and said unto Daniel: 'Thy God, whom thou servest continually, He will deliver thee.' . . . Then the king went to his palace and passed the night fasting . . .

"Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions. And when he came near unto the den to Daniel, he cried in a lamentable voice . . .

" 'O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?"

Daniel's reply is so calm as not to lack the formality proper in speaking to a sovereign.

" 'O king, live forever! My God hath sent his angel and hath shut the lions' mouths, and they have not hurt me . . .'

"So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he trusted in his God."

In this last explanation lies the whole force of the tale. Trust in itself is power. It cannot be supposed that a God, pleased by the flattery of confidence, would do as a reward

for trust that which otherwise He would not do. This is to cheapen God and faith alike. Trust that is not founded on knowledge can only be the hope of desperation. Daniel trusted God because he knew God. Knowing God, he understood God, to the measure in which the understanding of God is possible to man. To him God was not only power, but loving and reasonable power, exercised on behalf of men to the degree in which men can be induced to use it. He could go into the den of lions with the certainty that no mortal injury could reach him. He was not speculating; he was not merely hoping. *He knew.* To the extent to which he knew, to that extent he was immune.

VII

This is the whole message of the Book of Daniel. All else, full of high wisdom in itself, is a corroboration of this truth. In the first part of the work, that which deals with the dramatic episodes, there are two dreams, which Daniel interprets. One is on the part of Nebuchadnezzar; the other on the part of Belshazzar. In each interpretation the principle is the same, that earthly power is nothing before the operation of spiritual law. Nebuchadnezzar at the climax of his might loses his

mind and is driven from men, till he learns that it is not he who rules, but the Most High God. From Belshazzar, equally at the summit of earthly pride, the kingdom departs and is given to another. In other words, material force has only the validity ascribed to it by man. It prevails only so long as man chooses to submit to it. Let spiritual aid be invoked, and the material vanishes.

The so-called "prophecies" of Daniel carry this concept one step further on. Not only is spiritual law potentially almighty, but a day will come when it will be actually so. Man will not always tie his own hands with material helplessness. He will develop; he will progress; he will come into his heritage of release. Far in the future it may be, and yet the day will dawn when material fetters shall be broken. One like a Son of Man will climb near to the Ancient of Days, the personification of Eternal Law, and share His supremacy.

"I saw in the night visions, and behold there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a Son of Man, and he came near to the Ancient of Days . . . and there was given him dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve

him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

VIII

It is not surprising that to the ancient spiritual mind all material might was typified by Babylon. That before the victory of a Son of Man Babylon should fall, passed into the faith as an axiom. In the great exultation that closes the Apocalypse of John in the Isle of Patmos, one of the most glorious passages celebrates this achievement. It is the fulfilment of that promise made by the Elemental God to Man and Woman as they left their first Paradise of innocence and ignorance, in which the spiritual triumphs over the material at last.

"After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, armed with great power. The earth shone with his splendor, and with a mighty voice he cried out, saying:

" 'Babylon the Great is fallen, is fallen! . . .

"The kings of the earth who have committed fornication with her, and have revelled in luxury, shall weep aloud and lament over her:

" 'Alas! alas! thou great city, O Babylon, the mighty city! for in one short hour thy doom has come!'

"And the merchants of the earth weep aloud and lament over her because now there is no sale for their cargoes—cargoes of gold and silver, of jewels and pearls, of fine linen, purple and silk, and of scarlet stuff . . . all kinds of goods in ivory and in very costly wood; in bronze, steel, and marble. Also cinnamon and fragrant balsam, odors to burn as incense and for perfume; frankincense, wine, oil; fine flour, wheat, cattle, and sheep; horses, and carriages, and slaves, and the lives of men . . .

"And every shipmaster, and every passenger by sea, and the crews, and all who ply their trade on the sea, stood afar off, and cried aloud when they saw the smoke of her burning. And they said, 'What city is like this great city?' And they threw dust upon their heads, weeping aloud and sorrowing.

"'Alas! alas!' they said, 'for this great city in which, through her vast wealth, the owners of all the ships on the sea have grown rich, because in one short hour she has been laid waste. . . .'

"Then a single angel of great strength took a stone resembling a huge millstone, and hurled it into the sea, saying:

"'So shall Babylon, that great city, be vio-

lently hurled down, and never again be found. No harp or song, no flute or trumpet, shall ever again be heard in thee. No craftsman of any kind shall ever again be found in thee. Never again shall the light of a lamp shine in thee. For thy merchants were the great men of the earth, and with the magic that thou didst practise all nations were led astray.' "

So shall come to an end the civilization of Cain, the art, the beauty, the pride, hostile to the Spirit, and material only.

"After this I seemed to hear the far-echoing voices of a great multitude in heaven, who said: 'Alleluia! The salvation and the glory and the power belong to our God!' "

JESUS DISCOVERS THE UNIVERSAL FATHER

IT is often stated in the New Testament that in Jesus of Nazareth the Scriptures were fulfilled. This means many things, and among them that He gathered together all that had previously been learned about God, that He enlarged it, unified it, and gave it to the world through a new form of worked-out demonstration.

I

The special feature of His mission is that it is proved in act as well as embodied in doctrine and counsel. The modern appeal is, as often as not, to the teaching alone of the Christ, forgetful of the fact that His own was as much to His works as to His words. Any one can speak; not every one can show. Teaching is good in so far as it explains, but conviction lies in the accomplished fact. All other great spiritual pioneers demonstrated partially. He did it wholly, learning from all who were before Him, fusing their discoveries, and widening them till

they were coextensive with the Infinite. He first saw God as Infinite Love, Power, Intelligence, and Good. It was much to do that, but He did more. He reflected what He saw. Of the Perfect Father He was the Perfect Son, manifesting God as light manifests the orb which sheds it.

"'Master,' said Philip, 'cause us to see the Father. That is all we need.'

"'Have I been so long among you,' Jesus answered, 'and yet you, Philip, do not know me? He who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you ask me, Cause us to see the Father? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The things that I tell you all I do not speak on my own authority; but the Father dwelling within me carries on his own work. Believe me, all of you, that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me; or at any rate believe me because of what I do.'"

That is to say, He understood God so well that in the terms of human nature He could express God exactly. He did this not through any power apart from God, but because His only power was God's. "The Father dwelling within me carries on His own work." The Son is the instrument; the Father is the agent.

"In most solemn truth I tell you that the Son can do nothing of Himself. He can only do what He sees the Father doing. For whatever He does, that the Son does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son and reveals to Him all that He himself is doing."

In this unison of the One with the Other the Son of Man becomes the Son of God.

II

For He who is called the Son of Man is our only instance of a Normal Man. We speak of our human rank and file, those among us who have no distinguishing qualities, as normal men, but that is because our conception of normality is the commonplace. The *norma* is the rule, and the strange rule we make for ourselves is that he who neither rises above nor falls below the dullest average is he who best reaches the ideal. Our normal man cannot be very bad, but then he cannot be very good. He must possess some gifts, but he cannot possess many gifts. He can attain to normality only by combining the pale virtues and equally pale vices to which the mass of us have little or no objection.

Now the *norma,* the rule, is an exact measurement. It must be complete. A foot or a yard or a mile cannot lack a hair's breadth. The

normal is not that poor, middling, not-very-good-and-not-very-bad we often suppose it to be; it is the perfect accomplishment, to which nothing need be added, and which would cease to be the rule were a jot or tittle taken away from it.

Of the many millions of human things who from the dawn of time have struggled up toward the light, only one of us has reached it. We might compare our race to a breed spawned in the bottom of the ocean, but with an instinct in each one of us to rise to the sun and air. Through myriads of eons we have been making this sublime attempt. Some never get far above the primeval slime. Some are midway from the depths. Here and there a daring creature pierces far beyond midway, and yet is held back by grosser qualities. But *One,* one matchless Being, goes, without fluctuation or deviation, straight up to where the birds skim and the gallant ships pass by. He reaches the normal, the example and proof to those of us who are still fighting the lower currents that the normal can be reached.

Since it is obviously beyond the scope of a volume such as this to sum up even in the briefest way the treasures of value which this Man brings into the world, it will be enough to say

that we shall limit ourselves to this one. As a perfect man he is the normal man.

Moreover, it is a curious anomaly that one Christian can rarely speak of Jesus the Christ to another—except in cases where they use the same sectarian shibboleths—without exciting irritations and often hatreds and hostilities. Personally I am so aware of this that I hesitate ever to mention His name except to those who have detached themselves from sectarian ties and are therefore without prejudgments. Of this present volume the purpose is wholly non-controversial. To avoid controversy I am not saying of Jesus of Nazareth any of the thousands of things that might be said, and that some of my readers would like me to say. Selecting a point as to which there will probably be no difference of opinion—and such points are not many—I throw all my emphasis on that; as a perfect man He is the normal man.

III

And as a normal man He is the joy of all who know anything about Him. It is no more than the truth to say that the average man or woman never hears enough of Him. Doctrines may grow distasteful; churches may prove inadequate; academic morality may become no more

than a tape-string as a rule of conduct; but the person and character of Jesus of Nazareth never lose their charm. Human, lovable, approachable, with none of our pose of self-righteousness, but with heart wide-open to the weary, sinful, and heavy-laden of the race, He is one whom we can understand better than we do ourselves.

We can understand Him better than we do ourselves, because He is the rule. Subnormals, the rest of the race, puzzle us. They are subjects for analysis, psychological or pathological. We can get at their characters only by balancing incongruous traits. All fiction and drama, all history, medicine, and philosophy, most of the efforts of religion, center round the task of making the subnormal seem sane and comprehensible. With Jesus of Nazareth no such attempt is called for. He is as plain as the sun; as lucid as the daylight. The most simple as well as the most learned take the same delight in Him. Because He is man as man ought to be, man as man can become, to think of Him brings sweetness and light to our muddied and muddled world.

IV

And if He is our one example of a Normal Man, in what consists His normality?

1. First, I should say, in His virility.

We have here a point at which the modern reader may have to take issue with one element, sometimes a dominating element, in Christian tradition. It may even be said that Jesus of Nazareth has suffered not a little from His friends. Those friends have often—not always, of course—combined to show Him as feminized, buffeted, bruised, broken, beaten to His knees, knowing nothing but submission. We have but to think of the Christ of Christian art to see how rarely His manliness is ever emphasized. It is His suffering that is so generally hymned, not His conquering vibrancy. In much of Christian literature, painting, and speech, hostile critics, like Gibbon and Nietzsche, can easily see a weak teacher of the weak, rather than the strong apostle to the strong.

And yet there is plenty of evidence that He could have been neither the womanish, nor the sentimental, nor the emaciated figure so dear to the morbid imagination. He was embodied health and sanity. At the touch of His hand, at the sound of His voice, at the flash of His eye, sickness and delusion disappeared. That identity of health and holiness which we have retained in our language and so largely lost in

our thought must have ruled in His consciousness. His mere physical strength must have been tremendous. Twice He went into the Temple, and with nothing to help Him but His own right arm, drove out, as so many sheep, the hordes who polluted it. More than once, when the mob would have stoned Him, or, as at Nazareth, thrown Him over a cliff, "He passed through the midst of them" with a wholly superb coolness, "going His way." Alone among those planning His destruction, He was not afraid to "look round about Him with anger." The very soldiers sent out to take Him prisoner, fell backward from the greatness of His presence the minute he approached. His travels, His homelessness, His privations, His fastings, His all-night vigils, many small, scarcely noticeable details in the Gospels, imply powers of endurance which could be possessed only by a man of physical vigor and indomitable mind.

2. The second of His normal attributes seems to me His tolerance.

I choose this term because it is so large. Largeness, or as our modern idiom prefers, Bigness, is one of His outstanding attributes. He does not shut Himself up in a single compartment of life, as has so often been the case with

His followers. Life and Religion are identical to Him, and Religion as boundless as Life. Within His conception of Religion He finds all sympathies, all comprehensions. He is forbearing with human nature because He understands it. He understands it as a slowly climbing force, taking long, long centuries to surge up from a lower level to a higher one. For this reason He is never impatient with its progress. He never shows an inclination to make the race go faster than its degree of power will allow. When the kingdoms and the glory of the world were offered Him, so that He could have quickly brought about by force that which it would obviously take ages to produce by Love, He said, "Get thee behind me, Satan!"

He was not worried by man's tortoise-like advance. Immorality troubled Him but little. "Go and sin no more," is a favorite counsel to those whom He has helped, but it is never accompanied with shocked discourse or any hint that the sinner has outraged decency. There was only one sin, as far as we can judge, so abhorrent to His soul that on it He poured out all the invective His scorching words could utter. That was the sin of self-righteousness—the strange aberration which takes hold of many peo-

ple who are trying, rightly, to follow their own consciences, but insist, by fire and sword, by fine and imprisonment, that every one else shall follow these consciences too. On that narrow, corrupting arrogance He had no mercy. His scalding indignation against it sent Him to His death.

In other words, He was liberal in the sense of allowing man to take his own time and learn his own lessons. Man must do that even at the price of his mistakes, at the probable cost of suffering. The Master was not afraid of man's suffering. Suffering that could turn the prodigal son homeward had better have its way. Tender as He was, He was never sentimental. Eager as He was for the Kingdom of God to come, He knew there was all Eternity in which to wait for it.

3. The last element of His normality I shall name is holiness.

I should like to emphasize here the basic meaning of that word. Familiar as that basic meaning is to most of us, it rarely gets under the skin of the consciousness in such a way as to make it a foundational idea. It must do so, however, if we are in any degree to understand Jesus of Nazareth.

For Him holiness was never disconnected

with the related concepts of health and wholesomeness. We should not forget that the *w* in the word *whole,* and in the words derived from it, is little more than a printer's error. Health, wholeness, and holiness all spring from the same root, and consequently from the same thought. To be holy in the original sense meant to be whole, complete, or as our colloquial word goes, all-round, with no lawful and human element lacking to the character. The holiness of Jesus of Nazareth was in His being open on all sides, to all the winds of sympathy and interest, to all that occupied men. Though it was His chief concern to reveal the Father to His sons, He did it through the beaten human avenues, of none of which He was afraid. Whatever in Him was holiness was simple, manly, sane. Any one could approach Him. Everybody did. He met all on their own level, and, except where self-righteousness rendered it impossible, raised them to His own. There could have been nothing spectral or mystical in His holiness, nothing of the saint in stained glass. While among ourselves holiness is likely to mean development along one line only, with a corresponding repression along others, in Him all lines were developed equally. The lighter

elements must have existed in His character as well as the graver ones. Because those condensed and fragmentary accounts of His life, which are all we have in the Gospels, naturally emphasize the graver moments in His career, we too often assume that He had no capacity for joyousness. But at the marriage-feast in Cana, for example, He could hardly have been as a death's-head to the merriment. The same thing must have been true of the other houses in which He was a guest. He must have brought there the radiance of a wholesome, not of a super-solemn, personality. Though He may rightfully be called the Man of Sorrows, it is part of all human experience that he who bears his sorrows best is he who keeps them in the background, helping others to be cheerful in spite of all the griefs he may carry in his heart.

My point is that holiness is not the grim, ghastly, anemic thing we so often make of it. He who was whole with complete wholeness must have embodied all that was sanest and healthiest in men. The unhappy Jesus we tend to create for ourselves could not have been the reality. His apostle could not counsel us to "rejoice evermore," if He had not rejoiced as our Example. As a matter of fact it was "for

the joy that was set before Him" that He endured the cross and despised the shame. Joy must have had a large place in his holiness, otherwise He could not have been whole. The kingdom of God, according to St. Paul, is joy in the Holy Ghost, and the fruit of the Spirit, Love, Joy, Peace. It is impossible that He who is the perfect instance of the normal man should have lacked this ruling essential to all normality.

V

It is reasonable to suppose that, because He was the perfect Son of Man, God was visible to Him in that wholeness of which all previous efforts had given no more than glimpses. And when I speak of God's being visible, I speak, of course, of nothing connected with the senses. That common phraseology in which we talk of "seeing God," as we see physical objects and other men and women, does much to confuse our true understanding of God. Spiritual things, St. Paul informs us, are spiritually discerned. That is, they are discerned in the higher reaches of the mind, in the higher intuitions of the heart. In proportion to the degree in which the mind and heart of the normal man were clear, pure, whole, God could manifest Himself in holiness, purity, and clarity. The

measure was not that of God's willingness to impart, but of the normal man's capacity to receive, and in the case of Jesus of Nazareth the Normal Man could receive in full.

His perceptions were unimpaired. Those of subnormals are, as a matter of course, dulled and inaccurate. In their past attempts to see God they had seen Baals, Ashtaroth, Molochs, and other such distortions. At best they had perceived Jehovah, the tribal God of the Hebrews, enlarging the vision and ennobling it a little at a time. In Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, we reach the highest and the widest range within subnormal capacity, but even that is short of what could have been. Only Normal Man could apprehend God in the degree to which it is open to dwellers on this planet to apprehend Him. Jesus of Nazareth, as the only Normal Man, alone attains to the spiritual sight with which it is possible, in our limited human phraseology, to behold God as He is.

VI

And, beholding Him as He is, He found but one term in which to express Him to His fellowmen. He was the Father. He was not *a* Father; He was *the* Father. There was no other. Physical, human fatherhood, beautiful as it is, was

but a pale reflection of this eternal, vital, and glorious relationship. "Call no one on earth your father," is His way of putting it, "for One alone is your Father—the Heavenly Father." That is to say, dear as earthly fatherhood can be, loving, supporting, essential as we may find it, the Divine Fatherhood, to those who understand it, is more essential, more supporting, more loving, and still dearer. Every child born is the son of *the* Father before he is anything else. Not only that, but the child's father is the child of *the* Father; the child's mother is the child of *the* Father. The Infinite Fatherhood surrenders no one and nothing. No one and nothing are outside its range. All things, from the universe to the electron which helps to compose it, exist together in this one Loving Heart, which has consciousness and care of all.

For such a thought human language is inadequate. Jesus of Nazareth, like any of ourselves, was obliged to take the expressions which speech offered Him. For His purpose, in this one detail at least, even the word Father only meets the immensity of the concept when we enlarge its every-day meaning. It is safe to say that most of the heart-breaking strifes over what is called the Trinity could have been avoided had

Christians been clear in their minds as to this one point. Whatever our phraseology, the concepts of Father and Son, when we speak of the Divine, are not the same as those we have in mind in speaking of the mortal. For the Eternal Source and That Which Eternally Springs of It, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are approximate terms only. Nevertheless they are the clearest and the most endearing which language could furnish even to the Master.

VII

It is important, moreover, in view of this Master's use of terms, to know what He means by the word *Heaven*. Heaven and the Father are repeatedly put by Him into the closest connection. "Your Father in Heaven," "the Heavenly Father," are the phrases by which He habitually marks the distinction between this Fatherhood and physical, mortal paternity. We lose much, if not the greater part, of the force of these words when Heaven is to us some such distant location in space as the Greeks and the Romans made for their gods on the top of Mount Olympus.

And yet, I venture to think that this is our commonest Christian interpretation of the word. Heaven is a place. It is not only a place, but

a place indefinitely far away. God lives in it, a glorified human being sitting on a throne, possibly as three glorified human beings sitting on three thrones, surrounded by His court of lesser glorified human beings, and very difficult of access. He can be flattered by our hymns, choirs, organ-recitals and other musical tributes, by our money collections, by the handsome churches we build in his honor. Our prayers are less sure of reaching Him. "We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord," we wail and wail, and even then are not very certain that He will. "Bending from Thy throne on high, hear our solemn litany," is the appeal with which we begin, in many of our churches, the reiteration of our prayers. The words are worth noticing because they express the idea chiefly current in popular Christian thought. He is so far away that He cannot hear us without bending. He is so appallingly removed from us by other qualities than distance that we can never be quite confident of winning His attention. He is up in the bright sky; we are down on the dark earth; between us and Him there roll the uncountable leagues of space, as hard for our thoughts to traverse as for our cleverest flying inventions to reach Mars.

VIII

But the Heaven of Jesus of Nazareth is within man. It is there that the Father dwells, not exclusively there of course, but there as part of that universal which alone can be His sufficient habitation. "The Father dwelling within me carries on His own work." He says this of Himself, it is true; but, as I understand the New Testament, He never claims privileges for Himself which do not, apparently, belong to all of us. Heaven, we may assume, is that condition in which the Perfect Will is perfectly carried out.

"Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven." That is, we may make a heaven of earth in proportion as we carry out That Will. The thing can be done. Heaven is here if we will only make it manifest. Blessing, success, happiness are within our power. They are not far away. They are not outside of our reach. They are not reserved for after-death. They are not localized beyond the stars. The Father is the Ever-Present. He does not keep Himself away from us. He does not put us away from Him. "I am not alone, but the Father who sent me is with me." Again He says that of Himself; but every individual may say it likewise. And wherever the Father is, there too must be Heaven.

We have only to make it manifest to prove it to ourselves. In proportion as we make it manifest we get that proof. Some emphasis must here be thrown on that word proportion.

Few of us carry out the Perfect Will approximately; none of us carries it out perfectly; some of us carry it out very little; and some of us have no thought of carrying it out at all. Nevertheless, no attempt, however insignificant, is thrown away, or fails of its reward. In the Heaven that is possible on earth results must be, so to speak, mathematical. Right produces right to the degree in which it is right. A small right will produce a small benefit, but at least it will produce that. A greater right will produce a greater one. It must be open to us to manifest our Heaven according to the measure of our effort, while it is evident that all of us manifest that Heaven to some extent. There is no life so wicked, so unhappy, so empty, that some sort of Good is not proved by it in some way. The realization may be irregular, but that it exists is a matter of common experience. In one man it may take the shape of a great deal of money and very little happiness, in another that of a great deal of happiness and very little money. But the truth that the workman

is worthy of his hire and gets it may be taken as general. It is not possible that in the Kingdom of Heaven any one should go unrewarded. His reward may be great or small, as the case may be, but it will be in proportion to what has been earned.

IX

For the Master makes it quite clear that one of His reasons for expressing the Divine in terms of Fatherhood is to give us a conception of paternal care.

"Ask, and it will be given unto you; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you. For it is always he who asks that receives, he who seeks that finds, and he who knocks that has the door opened to him. What man is there among you who, if his son shall ask him for bread, will offer him a stone? or if the son shall ask him for a fish will offer him a snake? If you then, imperfect as you are, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in Heaven give good things to those who ask Him?"

The refusal of the Christian world to credit this is another curious anomaly. At such a promise, one might have supposed, the whole human heart would have leaped. But not so!

Nothing that He ever said has been taken with so much distrust. Nothing that He ever proved has been so persistently set aside. Too good to be true has been the all but universal negative with which the declaration has been met. It is hardly too much to say that a Father who neglects, who denies, who torments, who starves out, is the one whom Christians elect to believe in, nothwithstanding all the efforts Jesus of Nazareth has made to implant a more generous ideal.

At our best conception of the Father is often that of one from whom we may wring favors by our fervency of petition, but who without fervency of petition will be hard to move. Hundreds of millions of Christians, in hundreds of millions of agonies, have flung themselves on their knees and tried to touch that heart of stone by the anguish of despair. If they could only convince Him of their need, they have seemed to reason, He might do something for their relief. The difficulty is in so convincing Him. He must be implored, and implored again. Even so He may refuse His aid, but it is worth making the attempt. With Him, the Christian often argues, you never know, you never can be sure. The chances are that He

will go on allowing you to suffer, but if you can touch His divine caprice you may profit by a miracle. The point is to keep at Him, to show Him by sheer intensity that we will not be denied.

X

"And when praying do not use needless repetitions as the Gentiles do, for they expect to be listened to because of their multitude of words. Do not, however, imitate them. For your Father knows what things you need before ever you ask Him."

It is incomprehensible that a Father who knows what things we need before ever we ask Him should keep us short of them. If He seems to keep us short of them, some other explanation must be found. To acquit God of withholding from us that which He could give us as easily as not, the Master appeals to the natural instinct of fatherhood. "What man is there among *you* who, if his son shall ask him for bread, will offer him a stone?" That our Father in Heaven should do it is impossible. Where we lack a reasonable plenty, a reasonable happiness, it must be that we lack the key which unlocks the infinite sources of supply.

In Him that key would seem to be His settled

and serene confidence. He is always sure. He is not driven to needless repetitions and multitudes of words. He does not churn His spirit with distrusts, with hopings and fearings and questionings, none of which lead Him anywhere. He is the Father's Son. This says everything. Before He makes the great test of the supremacy of spiritual over material power in raising Lazarus from the dead He says: "Father, I thank thee *that thou hast heard me.* I know that thou always hearest me." Before it has been done He knows that what He has asked for has been granted. "Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." Nothing could be plainer or more definite.

XI

It cannot be, however, a mere matter of blind suggestion and autosuggestion, like that with which we would trick ourselves in some of our modern curative mechanics. There must be a reason for this generosity, and that reason we find in the law of Fatherhood. The Father loves His son and wishes him to fulfil himself. He fulfils himself by following his special bent. Since he comes into the world with an endowment and equipment peculiar to himself, it is

right that these should have play. It will be the Father's delight to develop the son according to his special aptitudes. Unless he is developed according to his special aptitudes, his special value will be thrown away. What he needs for this purpose will therefore be his to take in proportion to his necessity.

In other words, the thought of a Father who thwarts, crosses, and irritates is not to be entertained. On the contrary, human nature is armed with a power practically irresistible. It is irresistible because it is God's power wielded to please and advance His son. As such it can conquer all obstacles. Not only can it conquer all obstacles but it can be used freely.

Of this freedom the Master gives a striking and curious example, not always understood for what He meant it to be.

"After they had left Bethany He was hungry. But in the distance He saw a fig tree in full leaf, and went to see whether perhaps He could find some figs on it. When however He came to it He found nothing but leaves—for it was not fig time—and He said to the tree, 'Let no one ever again eat fruit from thee!'"

We must assume that the tree was one over

which He had some right, and that its destruction would not injure any one. It is conceivable that He had been looking for just this opportunity to show what man's power exercised in God could do.

"In the early morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree withered to the roots. And Peter, recollecting, said to Him: 'Look, Rabbi, the fig tree which you cursed is withered up.'

"Jesus said unto them:

" 'Have faith in God. In solemn truth I tell you that if any one shall say to this mountain, Remove and hurl thyself into the sea, and has no doubt about it in his heart, but steadfastly believes that what he says will happen, it shall be granted him. That is why I tell you, as to whatever you pray and make request for, if you believe that you have received it, it shall be yours.' "

This is considered hard not only to do but to think possible. It is hard because in our thought of it the Father's Almighty good-will is not taken into account. If when we pray we try to believe it, it is more often than not by the exercise of will-power. "I will make myself believe," is the dogged resolution with which we go about this work, and are scarcely

surprised when nothing comes of it. Needless to say a mere forced belief is futile. Everything is futile till we understand what it is we believe in, after which no force need be applied.

We might imagine the Master explaining the incident of the fig tree somewhat in this way:

"The Father is so eager that you should not think of yourselves as the helpless victims of the world's forces that He permits me to make for your benefit this demonstration of sheer power. The destruction of a fig tree can be of use to no one. But if in what is of use to no one our power is so great, how much greater must it be for all those purposes which meet human need? For the meeting of human need the Father has stored the universe. For the tapping of His resources He has methods outside all the laws of work and wages, investment and dividend, economic supply and demand. To know this, to know it in such a way that you can dismiss doubt and worry from your mind, is to open the windows of heaven, and let treasure be poured out on you."

XII

So that in this knowledge of a Divine Father, Loving and Protective, we reach the light foreseen from the earliest ages of mankind as the

dawn is foreseen by the watchers of the night. In this the nations of the earth could be blessed as in no other way. A higher concept of the human race than that which makes them the sons of One Loving Father is not possible. A higher concept of God than that which sees Him as the Source, Guardian, and Strength of the whole universe could not be held by man. Only the Perfect Son could have discovered it. Only a Being so human that He is the Son of Man, and so Divine that He is the Son of God, could have shown us the Father as all that man needs, and man as so much of what the Father must rejoice in. It is the beauty of His life, of His teaching, and in a certain sense of His works especially, that they leave us with the warm heart, the strengthened will, and the inspiration of courage.

All other discoverers of any of God's attributes are, in the nature of things, remote from us. Abraham is dead, and Moses, and David, and Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and Daniel. Great as they are, they are of the past. This Man is the Ever-Present. He is ageless, timeless, epochless. To every individual who hears Him He brings the full measure of His powers in proportion to that individual's ability to take

of them. In His vision of the Infinite Father in Heaven, of the Infinite Heaven in the Father, of the Infinite God in Man, and of Man as the Son of God, He reaches all that the Law, the Prophets, and the ancients who wove the prehistoric legends, hoped for and worked toward.

THE GREAT ASSIMILATION

IT is not pretended that to the reading of the Bible this volume can do more than afford a clue. This book may possibly be likened to the thread which, in the mythological story, helped to lead the slayer of the Minotaur out of the labyrinth. To the modern reader the Old Testament especially is often a maze of bewildering paths, some of them puzzling, some of them blind alleys, not a few of them misleading or running the wrong way. What I have tried to show is that anything we find perplexing or obscure belongs to the nature of man as he sheds a little of his grossness in coming up out of the primeval to find God. On man's many misconceptions of God must rest all criticism, all blame.

At the same time man *has* been coming up out of the primeval. We see him as constantly making progress, rising to higher ideals of himself, to broader perceptions of the Divine. In his unfolding the few steps to which I have pointed have not, of course, been the only ones.

They have merely been examples of a growth going on continuously throughout the history of mankind. Almost any important character in the Bible stands for something. Each contributes his or her small portion of discovery in the wide field of the knowledge of God. All I have been able to attempt is to indicate faintly that process of expansion through which the Elemental God of primitive mankind grew clearer and clearer to the spiritual watcher till the Universal Father of Jesus the Christ at last became visible.

I

We must now ask this question: Of the mass of Truth acquired through the ages, to be clarified, beautified, and enlarged, by Jesus of Nazareth, how much has been absorbed by the modern consciousness?

I think we must answer, Very little.

Very little has ever been absorbed by any consciousness, modern or ancient. It must be remembered that the Bible deals mainly, though not altogether, with individuals. If progress was made, individuals made it. If spiritual laws were discerned, individuals discerned them. If right was found to be more practical than wrong, individuals made the discovery. The masses

learned little or did not learn at all. What they did learn they often misconstrued, and what they did not misconstrue they often ignored in practice. No more than the ancient world was influenced by the protests of Jeremiah is the modern world affected by the teachings, exemplified in acts, of Jesus Christ.

The term "Christendom" is little more than a geographical expression. That it includes those people who, in a vague and undiscriminating way, admit that Jesus Christ was right, is the most that can be said for it. Otherwise it implies no acceptance of His way of life, and no obligation to make use of His methods. Only by an extensive stretching of the word, and by discarding conditions which the Master would have called essential, can the nations which make up Europe and America be considered Christian.

As it has always been, so it is today; only individuals grasp the significance of His mission and find in it their inspiration. No groups, no societies, no nations, do this more than verbally. Nominal assent and practical dismissal might be said to stamp the attitude of Christendom to the Sermon on the Mount. If this can be said of the most human and appealing of all codes of

conduct, still more is it true of those "mighty works" He commanded His followers to perform. As to them His injunctions are for the vast majority of Christians neither more nor less than a dead letter. It is but the uttering of a truism to observe that any Christianity we see around us is a crude distortion of the Pattern to which it is supposed to conform.

II

For this lack of assimilation there is a good reason. It is that which, obtaining throughout the Old Testament, is equally valid under what we are pleased to call the "Christian dispensation." Though individuals have apprehended and comprehended Truth, they have been scattered members of an undeveloped race. For the race as a whole the teachings and the acts of the Christ are as yet too large, too noble, too practical, too easy and too hard. They represent the goal. We represent the players in the game, and the game is just beginning.

It should not be forgotten that even the most enlightened portions of the human race are as yet in a low state of evolution. For one thing, their period of advance as fully developed human beings has been relatively short. Something like five thousand years would seem to

cover the whole of the epoch we count as historic, and in comparison with the millions of years consumed in the preliminary stages a space of five thousand years is but little.

Yet during that time the ascent has been rapid. We have only to contrast the achievements of the day with those of the age, let us say, of Abraham, or of Herodotus, to see how great has been the gain. It has been not only material gain, but intellectual and moral. Each new year sees a quickened pace in going forward. Those of us who can look back twenty or forty or sixty years find the days which we once thought a high-water mark amusingly antiquated now. Those who will be in a position to look back twenty or forty or sixty years to our present stage of accomplishment will find us amusingly antiquated in our turn. But to ourselves we seem as the last word of the Almighty's expression, equal to anything. We have traveled so fast. We have done much. We have mastered the sea and the air, and with our telescopes, microscopes, and spectroscopes peered into the unseen. We come to the conclusion that nothing is beyond us. Having reached that conclusion, we expect from ourselves so much that we grow bewildered and amazed at our lack of suc-

cess. We *ought,* we think, to do better. When we fail to do better, we seek some scapegoat, like incorrigible human depravity, or the insufficiency of the clergy, on which to throw the blame.

III

We spend much time in criticizing and condemning. No institution comes in for this more insistently than the Church. The Church is forever being found inadequate, its teachers arraigned as either listless or bigoted or behind the age. It is not my purpose to defend the Church. I wish merely to show as clearly and as briefly as I can some of the conditions which she has always, in our strong American phrase, been up against. The lack of assimilation will not be understood till we have some due perception of the capacities of the body called on to assimilate.

Let us assume that the Church is still a company of idealistic and eager-hearted men such as set forth to tell the tidings of the life of Jesus Christ to a race adrift amid the stupidities and futilities of materialistic beliefs. It is not only the nature of the message which we have to consider, but the nature of the race. We have taken it for granted that the race as a whole was able

to receive the message. My contention is that it was not, and is not yet. To repeat the figure already used, the reception of the message is the goal of the players who even now are only starting out to play.

It may be urged that it is already two thousand years since that gospel was first preached, but again, in the evolution of mankind, two thousand years are no more than a tale that is told or a watch in the night. In another two thousand years we may hope that the teachings of the Christ will be better apprehended; in another ten thousand years they may really be seen as the only rule for man. For the present they are as advanced mathematics, let us say, to the boy who is struggling with simple arithmetic, or as the brilliant performance of a Chopin nocturne or a Beethoven sonata to the little girl strumming at her scales. We prove daily that corporate acceptance is beyond us. Only individuals in our present stage are able to receive, digest, and appropriate, as has always been the case in the past.

IV

The review of a few of our mortal limitations will, I think, prove the point of our insufficient development.

1. The system of Jesus, which is radically spiritual, is given to a world materially minded in nearly all its ways of thinking. The control of Spirit over matter, over worldly affairs and over human life was the foundation plank on which the Nazarene Master based all His methods of operation. This control the race has never been able to admit. Even now, when physical science is coming round to demonstrate its correctness, the reluctance to believe in it is not in any whit removed.

On the other hand, that section of the world we know as Christendom has never been quite prepared to deny it. We might say that, in theory accepting the principle of Jesus, it has in practice woven it into a densely material scheme of life. The result is a hybrid system neither wholly material nor wholly spiritual, but generally false to both points of view. This is as far toward the daring and mighty attitude of Jesus as our degree of development has yet permitted us to go.

It is for this reason that the Church so often appears neither one thing nor the other. Ideally spiritual, and spiritual only, she has often the external and visible aspect of a mercantile establishment. That is to say, the materialism of the

race usurps the functions of the Church and misrepresents them. "The Children of This World," according to the Master, "are wiser in their generation than the Children of Light." They are more crafty, more in accord with the spirit of their times. They can catch the Children of Light and do almost what they will with them. The Church of Light is seized by them at will and turned into a Church of This World. It is not the Church that is to blame; it is the captors. The Word of God which, so St. Paul says, is mighty and powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword, becomes rusted, dulled, and deflected. It ceases to hit the mark. It often ceases to aim at it. It even falls useless from the hand of the spiritual warrior.

In other words, the materially minded race is as yet able neither to assimilate the example of Jesus, nor to let it go. It can only take it and corrupt it.

2. In the same way the race has been unable as yet to receive the Christ's large liberality. It is, so far, unequal to the conception of a teaching given to man, but not forced upon him. Religious liberty is a phrase of which we are proud, but it is a phrase only. It applies to the freedom of religious bodies from control by secular

governments, but there is no freedom for the individual within the body to which he elects to belong. He must submit to tests, he must toe a line, he must conform to other people's consciences rather than to his own, or be a heretic.

I am not objecting to this; I am saying only that it is as far as our race has progressed. We have not yet outgrown the impulse to seek domination. One man tries to dominate another, one nation another, one Church another. Governments dominate their citizens; churches their adherents. Individuals able to govern themselves, or read their own Bibles and form their own religious views, are few and far between. Mankind has not outgrown the ruling of the god Authority. A man must be under Authority, or he cannot be a man. Unless he submits to Authority he cannot be a citizen, he has no place in a Church.

Again, let me say I am not condemning this; I am speaking of it as a limitation. It is as far as we can go. The Church, whichever way you look, is a church not primarily of spiritual power, but of intellectual touchstones. It would govern your opinions rather than your mode of life. A Church of the Free is not possible. It would lack cohesion; it would have no order.

It would be a church of freaks and eccentrics. To get corporate action the god Authority must be bolstered up, and to bolster him up one system of reasoning is as valid as another. When you come down to a fine point, the difference between one church and another is not much greater than that between tweedledum and tweedledee.

The situation is one of which the Children of This World have never been slow to take advantage. In the degree to which the Children of Light have sought dictation the Children of This World have always been ready to dictate. You can hardly blame them. The result has been a series of religions in which no two agree, in which every one is hostile to every other, and yet in which no single one, Protestant or Catholic, does not seek to control the minds and beliefs of those who are willing to be so controlled. The opening to human ambition is obvious. The history of the Church, in practically any of its branches, is a record of the ability with which bold and unscrupulous men have ruled the morally pusillanimous by tyrannizing over their consciences. Again, what the New Testament calls "the Truth as it is in Jesus" is free from blame. We can only lament that our race has

not developed to a point at which to make better use of the Master's presentation of God.

3. Akin to domination is fanaticism. We get fanaticism when some man, or some group of men, has seized some genuine fact concerning God, and so draws the conclusion that God must be supporting him or them against all who have seized any other facts with the whole of His Almightiness. The assumption—more strictly speaking, the presumption—has been characteristic of man in every stage of his growth. It has made wars; it has created schisms; it has set back civilization; it has frustrated the good intentions of everything known as a Church.

The seed of fanaticism is in the conviction that a single individual can know all about God that there is to know. Whatever is not known to this individual, or whatever is viewed differently, is error to be rooted out by fire and sword. To the Children of This World fanaticism has always been a favorite means of stampeding the Church and wrecking it. They have done it again and again and again. Our race, in its present stage of spiritual culture, enjoys the spectacle. Not seldom some real spiritual gain has been made, some truth discerned in a way that merits the name of discovery. Left to itself

to enrich the general treasury of Truth by which man can bless himself it would be an asset to the human race. But it goes into the hands of the fanatics and becomes a curse. It forms a new sect. It is turned into a new storm center for hostilities. Those who are for it persecute those who are not, and those who are not, retaliate.

Persecution is the common method of fanaticism and takes any convenient form. It stops at no weapon on which it can lay its hands. Anything cruel will serve its turn, from social ostracism to burning at the stake. One might almost say that if it dared it would burn at the stake for preference. It will attack not only individuals, but societies and nations. Europe, Asia, and Africa, are largely in the hands of fanatics, all of them with some element of right in their views, while the United States is by no means free of them. Fanaticism is neither a national nor a geographical symptom; it is racial in the widest sense, and has so far accompanied man in every phase of his advance. Wherever it appears it makes the assimilation of Truth impossible. The breadth, the generosity, the liberality, the tolerance, the charity, that go with the knowledge of God can find no room in

the fanatic's narrow heart. Fanaticism vitiates all. At the present minute it goes far toward putting beyond solution the problems of the world at large, and our American problems in particular.

Fanaticism connects itself so closely with religion that it often seems as if it were part of it. The wars it inspires, the animosities it engenders, the persecutions in which it revels, are called religious wars, religious animosities, religious persecutions. But as a matter of fact religion has nothing to do with them. Fanaticism seizes on religion, as it will often seize on something else, something political, or something patriotic, in order to assuage its passions. It most frequently fastens on religion because religion most easily serves its turn. The very fact that it is closer to the heart than politics, closer even than love of country, makes it a ready vehicle for this enemy of God and man to ride.

When fanaticism comes in the disguise of religious zeal the simple-minded Children of Light are taken in by it. Time and time again they have allowed it to nullify all their discoveries in God, all their adventures into Love. Under such names as Faith, Loyalty, Devotion,

or anything else high-sounding enough, they have seated it on thrones, consecrated it at altars, put crowns and miters on its head, bowed down and kissed its feet in abject self-surrender. Not only have the Children of This World been wiser in their generation than the Children of Light, but the Children of Light have often seemed to have no sense at all. They can be hoodwinked by anything. They are hoodwinked today, right and left, in all the churches and in all the countries. Everywhere the Children of This World are in the saddle, driven by the will to dominate, with fanaticism as a scourge.

This belongs to our degree of racial development. In a measure, we cannot help ourselves. The best we can do is to struggle, to watch, to pray against being taken in ourselves. Practically every heart has a capacity for fanaticism, so that practically every heart has to be on its guard. There is no hope in this respect for progress in the mass. That the individual should train himself to be tolerant, generous, awake to the fact that Truth, Life, God, are larger than he or any group can compass, even though that group be called a Church—this, at the present time, would seem to be our utmost.

4. At the opposite extreme from fanaticism

is the human tendency to become static. This too has nothing to do with religion; but it so seizes on religion as a means of working itself out that, in common opinion, the two become identified.

The discoveries of the past, culminating in the knowledge of the Universal Father, were reached not through academic theses, but in practical experiment. The Nazarene Master in particular worked as well as taught. His gospel was a gospel of dynamics. Preaching, theory, doctrine, were not enough; things were to be *done*. Heal the sick! Cast out evils! Cleanse the lepers! Raise the dead! These were His commandments. The world was to be helped not merely in precept, but in deed. He put forth no dogmas; He built no churches; He trained no choirs; as far as we can judge He was indifferent to the functions we know as "services." But He fed the hungry; He gave sight to the blind; He caused lame men to walk; He freed epileptics from their seizures; He restored to their relatives some at least who had been snatched away by an untimely death; He bound up the broken heart. He came not to do everything nor to say everything. According to Himself there was much more that He could have

said had His followers been able to understand Him; there were works greater than any He had performed which they would be able to do if they but lived in His dynamic principles. Talking and writing would have their mission, but it was a secondary mission after all. The first place was reserved for the "demonstration of the Spirit and of Power."

There was nothing final in the work of Jesus of Nazareth. He takes pains to say so. As through expanding discovery right up to His own day God had become known as the Father, so when He, the Master, should have withdrawn, revelation would still go on dynamically. There would be perpetual unfolding.

There could be no resting on a work accomplished. Those who called themselves by His Name were to overtake Him—*and go further.* The operation of religion was to be like that of Nature, ever richer, ever fuller, more and more marvelous in its pouring out. The Bible is the record of a ceaseless spiritual energy. With the New Testament Power was put on the lips as one of the watchwords of mankind.

So by the first few generations of His followers it was understood. Their efforts were given not merely to know, but to do. Their inner con-

victions convinced others by their outward practical results. A reference of St. Paul's, not meant to be exhaustive, cites among the members of the Christian communities not merely apostles and teachers, but those endowed with powers that seemed miraculous, those who could heal the sick, those who could render loving service, those with a special ability for organization, those who could "speak with tongues," those who could interpret what was thus spoken. He is not here making a list of the works which by their understanding of spiritual law Christians could perform; his reference is purely incidental, leading up to his description of the source and fount of all spiritual action, which he calls Charity.

To be dynamic was the aim of the Children of Light till the Children of This World found their domination threatened. Static Christianity perhaps began before the so-called "conversion" of Constantine, but its paralysis certainly crept on rapidly after that event. The zeal of the Christian which had sought an outlet in works was now drained off into talk. The first convention for talk was assembled by Constantine at Nicæa. In proportion as the religion of the Christ became a religion of talk it became one of frozen energies. Today it does more

talking than all the parliaments, congresses, and other talking institutions of the earth, combined. In every church, chapel, and meeting house all over the Christian world, millions in number, a set speech is delivered, two or three times a Sunday, to be listened to with attention, or indifference, or ridicule, as the case may be. The ridicule is frequent. In these speeches much that is good is said, as well as much that is foolish, but rarely anything that the listener has not long ago learned by heart.

Even so, no great harm would be done did not the system tend to make of the listener a listener and nothing more. A static religion is a religion of acquiescence without action. Acquiescence without action is the charm with which the Children of This World lull the Children of Light into doing so little that what they do scarcely counts. Some personal moral restraint that leaves the world not much less wicked than it has always been; some more or less organized philanthropy which but tickles the surface of our social ills; some amount of pious or pietistic yearning, not often transmuted into doing; some sensuous enjoyment of the music and ritual our richer churches are able to provide; a tolerably generous contribution

of our funds; listening always, and always going away and forgetting what was said; these may fairly be said to represent the big activities of a static religion in which talking and listening have come to be the most important spiritual duties. Let a man think of attempting anything more vigorous—healing the sick, casting out evils, cleansing the lepers, raising the dead—and the Children of This World, who so largely fill our pulpits and our pews, cannot denounce him indignantly enough.

Once more it is a case of the Children of Light allowing themselves to be gulled; but it is what in our present condition of partial development we must be prepared for. The Children of This World masked behind theological bastions have confused the issue in so many ways, that the genuine seeker after that which will satisfy the hungry soul often does not know in which direction to turn. A religion of action has been distorted into one of words. Argument is raised against argument, and opinion against opinion, till, if you were to believe what you hear from the nearly four hundred sects of Protestants and Catholics, the Holy Ghost would be speaking with nearly four hundred contradictory voices. But all this is no part of religion. It is part of

the childishness of men. Because men, in their actual state, are unable to assimilate the knowledge of God as revealed through Jesus the Christ, they throw dust in their eyes, they throw dust in the eyes of others, so that none may see clearly. The condition belongs to our racial age, and out of it we shall grow.

5. The knowledge of God as revealed by Jesus the Christ is that of the Universal Father. This we have never been able to accept. There are individuals who *know* that they have a Heavenly Father, and who live in that knowledge. There are no nations who do so, and no Churches. We may use the term. We may wax sentimental over the degree to which, when we cannot find anything else as a principle of unity, we can all repeat the prayer, *Our Father which art in Heaven.* But there is not much use in a form of words, not even in *that* form of words, when there is no corroboration of a unified life behind it. The reality of the Fatherhood of God can be put to a very simple test in the reality of the Brotherhood of men.

In this twentieth century the Brotherhood of men is an ideal beyond our reach. It is not so much that we try for it and fall short; we do not try. The Churches do not try, otherwise they

could not be separated from each other by barriers of mutual coldness, disapproval, indifference, hostility. The Protestant is not a brother to the Catholic, nor the Catholic to the Protestant. The Baptist is not a brother to the Anglican, nor the Anglican to the Unitarian, nor the Unitarian to the Methodist. So, too, among nations. The Frenchman is not a brother to the German, nor the German to the Frenchman. The Hungarian is not a brother to the Roumanian, nor the Roumanian to the Bulgarian, nor the Bulgarian to the Serb. It is useless to multiply illustrations of facts notorious among ecclesiastical and national units. The whole condition of the world, of nations with regard to each other, and of nations within themselves, is a proof that no real sense of Brotherhood exists.

But without a real sense of Brotherhood there can be no real sense of Fatherhood. St. John puts this in a nutshell when he says with a frankness as nearly brutal as his sweet soul could come to:

"If a man say, 'I love God,' and hateth his brother, he is a liar. For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath *seen,* how *can* he love God whom he hath not seen?"

The two must go together. All the repetitions of *"Our Father which art in Heaven"* we can offer up will not avail us much till we can accompany them with some honest inner reference to Our Brother who is on Earth. In fact, we may reasonably ask if our lack of power in getting what we want from Our Father who is in Heaven may not largely be due to our lack of effort in giving to Our Brother who is on Earth what *he* wants. Our practice of Brotherhood *must* be the test of our real belief in God's Fatherhood. To a degree far beyond what we can estimate, the ills of the world today spring from disbelief in the Universal Father, perhaps more than from any other cause.

It is not that we once had that belief and have drifted away from it. We never had it. That we never had it, the history of the past is sufficient evidence. It is probably more alive today than it ever was before. It is talked about; it is written about; it is longed for.

Any practical, corporate realization of that belief is still far away from us, but the conviction is dawning in the mind that only the knowledge of the Brotherhood of men will rescue us from our distresses. Think what it would mean at the actual hour if the French

could say, "We are going to do the best we can for our brothers, the Germans," and if the Germans could respond with the same good-will. It is not too much to say that all our present unsolvable economic problems would be settled by this one resolution. A new era would set in.

But the principle should be clear to us that the Heavenly Fatherhood and the Earthly Brotherhood are two aspects of the same truth. In Him who first made known the Father of us all, the sense of Brotherhood with us all is one of the most endearing qualities. His practice of Brotherhood was superb. He was the equal of the greatest and also the equal of the least. He went to dine with the semi-outcast publican and with the aristocratic Pharisee, making no external difference between them. He neither patronized the one nor condemned the other, nor took notice of discourtesies except to defend the woman who was a sinner. Brother to His brothers, he could, with a confidence unknown to us, lift up His eyes unto Heaven and repeat His own personal version of the Lord's Prayer: "Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me, *and I know that Thou hearest Me always.*"

To this we seem as yet unequal. Individuals sometimes rise to it like eagles; nations and

Churches flop with unfledged wings. The time is not yet. Universal Fatherhood and Universal Brotherhood are foundational truths in the religion of Jesus Christ, but the religion of Jesus Christ has never yet been put into operation. The Children of This World have always stood in its way, while the Children of Light have thus far proved themselves inadequate as guardians.

Once more—it cannot be repeated too strongly or too often—the defect is not in the religion; it is in that race of men who as yet do not know what to do with it. Just as in its first exposition it was a stumbling-block to the Jews and to the Greeks foolishness, so it is still an exasperating puzzle to our undeveloped intelligence. What up to the present we have best been able to do is to fall on it and rend it. With our material instincts for domination, for fanaticism, for paralyzing spiritual action, and for rejecting the Fatherhood of God with the Brotherhood of men, we have torn the religion of Jesus into shreds, we have trampled it, we have defiled it, as a frenzied bull will do with a red rag. But the teaching itself is always there, waiting for a better comprehension to work it out in demonstration of the Spirit and of Power.

V

What perhaps we are really taking part in is the culmination, and the beginning of the downfall, of the civilization of Cain. We must not forget that those early pages of the Old Testament announce the struggle of the ages, the fight between the material and the spiritual till the spiritual gains the mastery. To win a portion of this warfare is probably the reason why we go through this earthly phase at all. In the first stage of the conflict the material system of Cain stamped out the spiritual system of Abel through force and violence. When the spiritual was reborn in Seth, the material changed the attack to the more subtle method of corruption. To corrupt the Children of Light has been the relentless aim of the Children of This World, and there is no question but that to a very considerable degree they have done it.

We can never understand the Bible till we read it as the story of that corruption, with the reaction of the Children of Light against it. As we saw in the first pages of Genesis, the seed of Cain enlisted on their own behalf all that most strongly appealed to the intelligence and the senses. They had the cities, the arts, the crafts, the temporal power. The children of Seth had

chiefly the Unseen. The duel was between the greatest of all the cosmic tendencies.

The battle-ground, which was at first confined to the theater of corporate action and public events, was shifted with the progress of the individual to include the human heart. In its recesses Cain and Abel are still striving with each other as they strove in their first primeval antagonism. The Children of This World and the Children of Light are no longer divided into clearly distinguished camps; the same man, and the same woman, can be the embodiment of both. It was a long step forward when it came to be recognized that the individual was, after all, the essential victim, or the essential conqueror.

VI

Slowly, through many vicissitudes, by means of many dramatic incidents and personal experiences, the Bible shows the growing triumph of the Spiritual Principle. If we cannot find that in its pages, we cannot find anything at all. A Church or an individual may interpret that Principle at discretion, but the Principle is the main thing. Churches and individuals are often small in their outlook; the Bible is always big. It is broad, human, universal. No one of us can plumb its heights or its depths, or traverse its

wide breadth. It is more than the Book of the Jews or of the Christians; it is the Book of Man. In it are reflected all man's basenesses, and all his efforts to outgrow them. Nothing is concealed, nothing is toned down. There is no fear in the Bible of whatever may be in the soul of man of either good or bad. With the end it has in view it can easily afford to show us everything.

The end is its test. By the test it must be judged. That test and that end show us a Man who has actually won the fight on which all others are engaged. He was, we are told, in all points tempted as we are, and yet gained the supreme victory. To the rest of us He is the proof that the supreme victory can be gained. Of the religion called by His Name this is the objective. It is the objective set before man throughout the Scriptures from the first page to the last. The seed of the woman will crush the serpent's head. The civilization of Cain will go down to final defeat before that civilization of Moses which has since been transformed into the civilization of the Christ.

In the meanwhile, patience. The battle which has gone on through the ages is not to be won today. It will not be won tomorrow. And yet each generation, and each individual in each

generation, can do something in the way of winning it in the end. It is what we are here for. No one's bit of struggle need ever be in vain. Coming out of it a stronger man than when he went in, he adds by so much a little to our racial discovery of God.

After all, that is our great purpose—the learning to know God. The Bible shows us how other men learned to know Him, each in His degree. The work is not completed yet; it is only going on. It will continue to go on. It will go on till, as in the Apocalyptic Vision, the kingdoms of This World have become the kingdoms of Our God and of His Christ. Then, in the words of Habakkuk, the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

THE END

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